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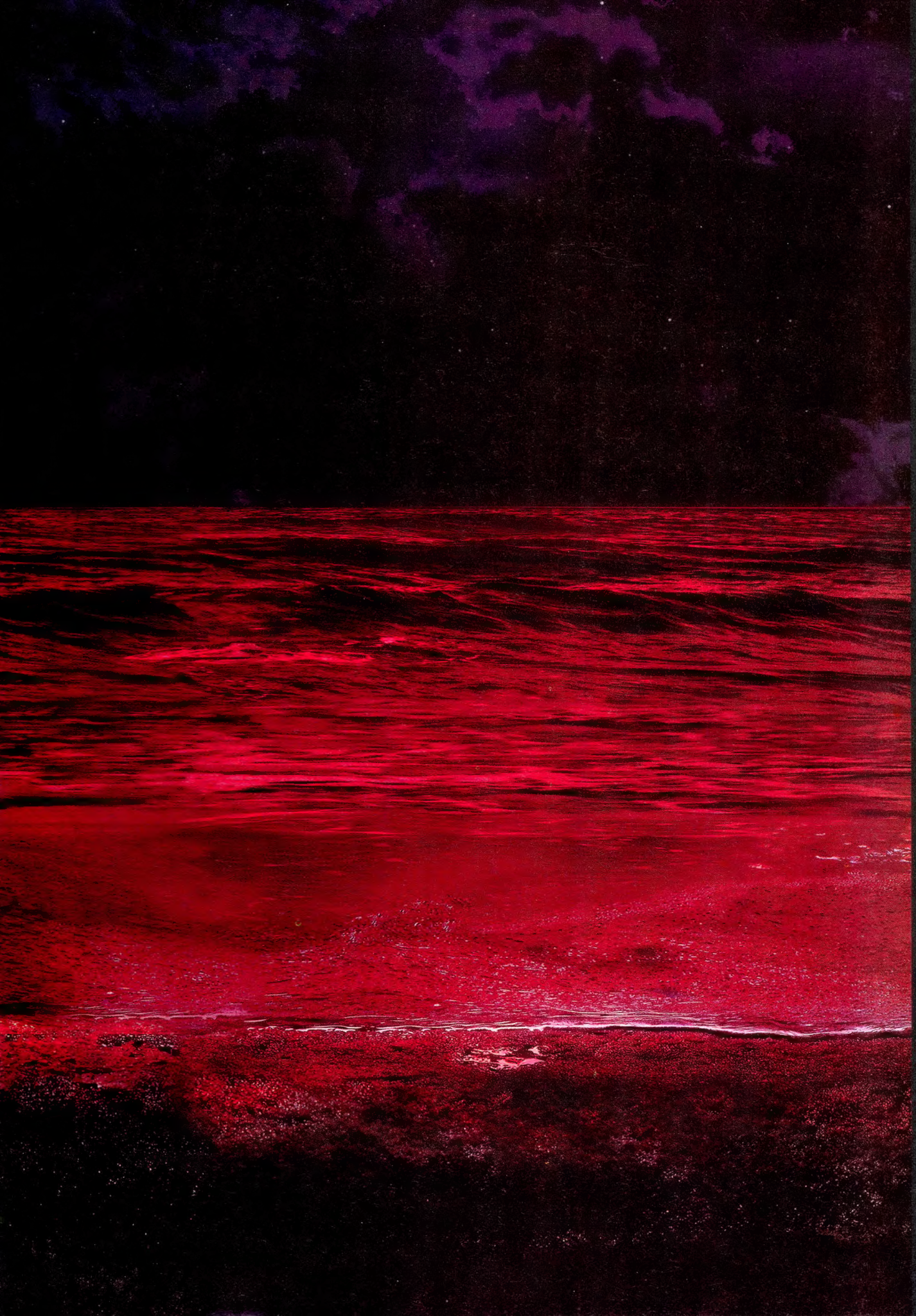
...and the seas became as BLOOD.



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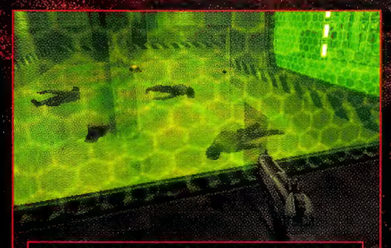
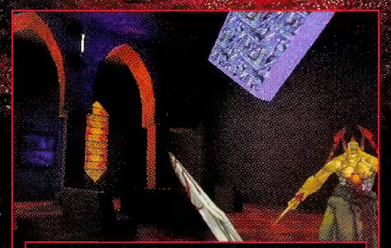


Take bloodshed to the next level with new 3D engine and fully modeled 3D characters.



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THE blood II CHOSEN

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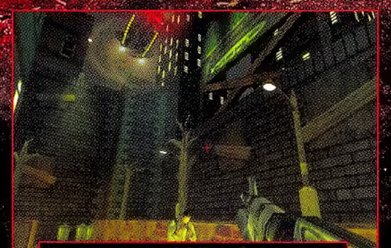
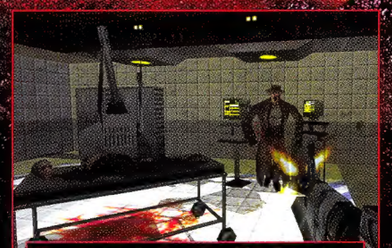


Explore vast, vivid, environments- and destroy everything in sight.



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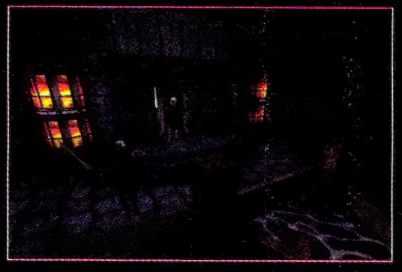

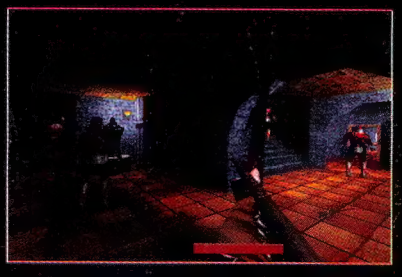

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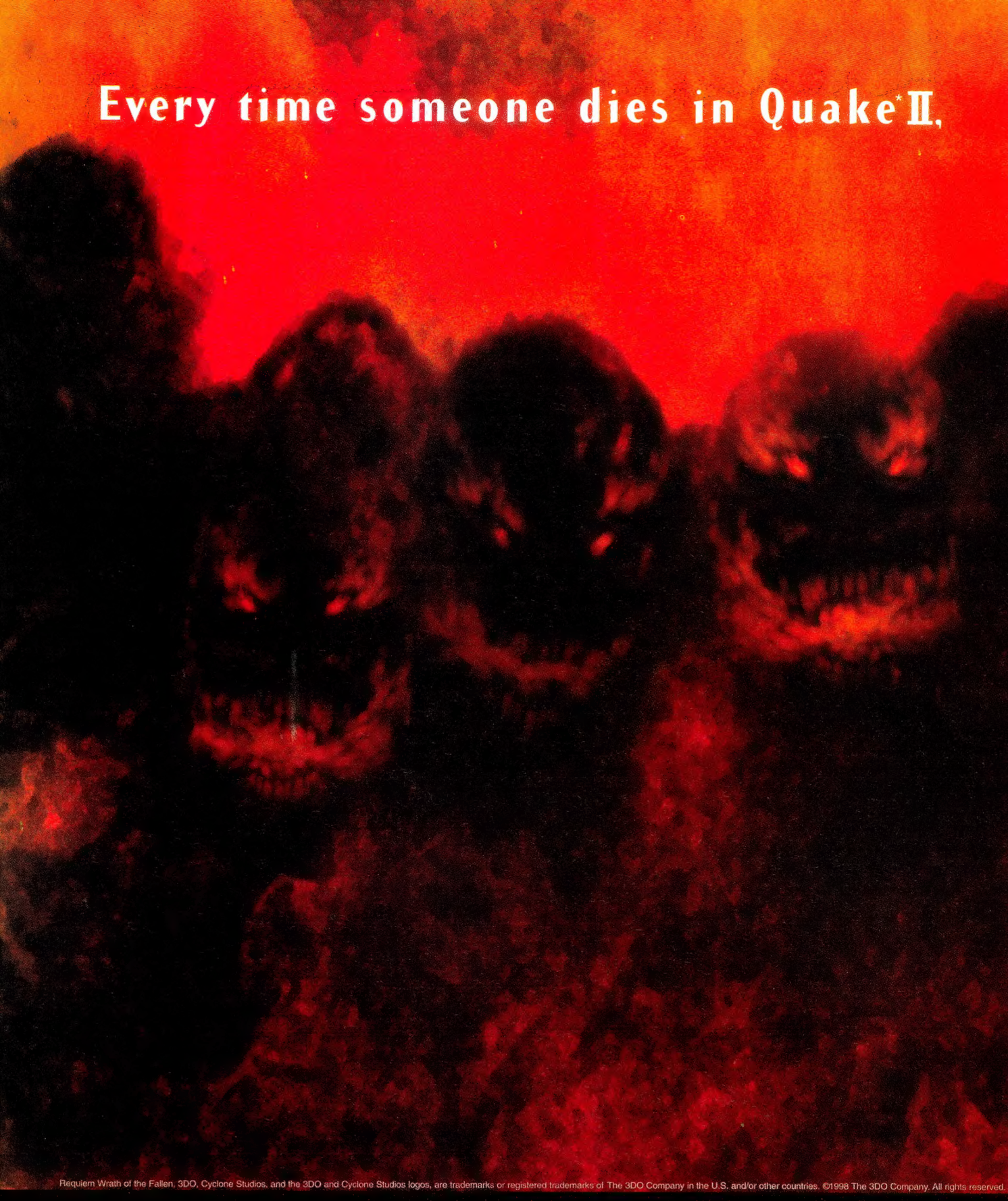

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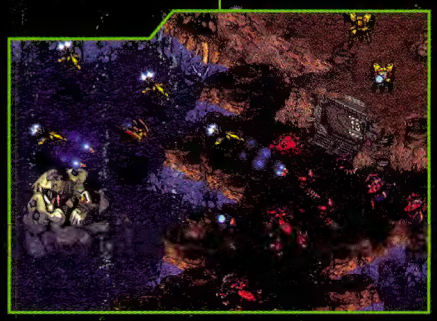

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Grim Fandango

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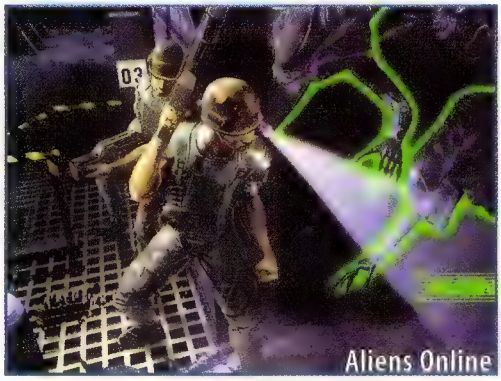

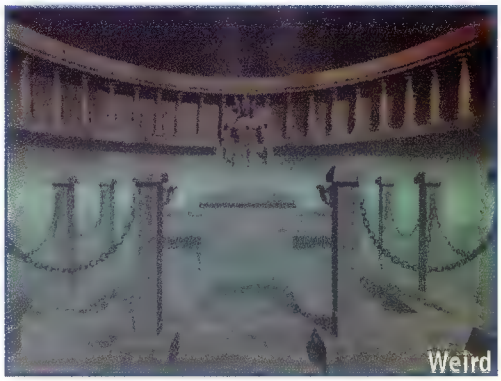

NEWS

Fast-accurate-often

Late-breaking stories, like the canceling of MicroProse's Guardians: Agents of Justice and id dropping solo games, plus regular industry financial reports, weekly top-ten lists, and updates.

FEATURES

What's hot, what's cool

Voodoo Banshee, the controversies surrounding Ultima Ascension, a round-up of baseball games, and much more.

REVIEWS

The truth and nothing but

Unreal, Panzer Commander, Tribal Rage, The Operational Art of War, XCOM Interceptor, Descent Freespace, Aliens Online, Sanitarium, Weird, and more!

FORUMS & CHAT

Speak out, speak up

Hot debates over MechCommander, Unreal, and XCOM Interceptor; great hints for Might & Magic VI, Sanitarium, and StarCraft; the secret of hardware ecstasy!

TIPS

Learn the game, insure your fame.

Escape the Sanitarium, master StarCraft's three races, catch the Black Dahlia, more!

CONTESTS

Free games. 'Nuff said

Altec Lansing speakers, Motocross Madness from Microsoft, TalonSoft's Tribal Rage, Blue Byte's Incubation, Ambertec's Pharaoh's Ascent, more!

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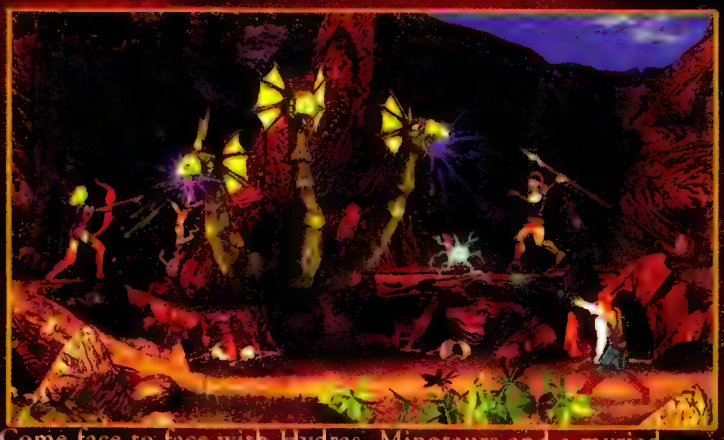

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The good old days®

Are original games a thing of the past?

by Steve Bauman

Every year the game industry swoops down on some unsuspecting city—this year Atlanta, next year Los Angeles—for the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3), the premiere showcase for the year's biggest games. The companies throw a few parties, hand out free drinks and T-shirts, hire a few curvy models to stand around and look bored and somehow manage to show off a few new games. Our annual summary of the year's hottest, most lens-flared PC games starts on page56.

All jokes aside, the big show does represent an opportunity for members of the press to see every piece of entertainment software packed in one convenient location; unfortunately, it's a poor place to pass judgment on a game. This doesn't stop every press entity from lavishing all sorts of awards on products demoed (how about one for "Best Game I Spent Five Minutes Observing Someone Else Play?"). We like to know more about the subtle details of the game, and a show like E3 isn't the place for subtlety.

While the show isn't the ideal place to demonstrate new products, it does allows us to observe industry-wide trends. There are the usual suspects: it's easier to count the games *not* supporting 3D acceleration and multiplayer, the number of online-only games seems to be in decline, and lens flare and colored lighting figure prominently in most new games. However, the most common post-show comment I've heard is that games are stuck in a rut, that we have an entire industry chasing last year's hits. No titles seem to jump out and scream, "You've never seen anything like me before! I'm original!"

This line of thinking usually segues into the old "there are no more original games anymore" discussion, usually followed by a longing for "the good old days®." Well... there were a lot of derivative games in "the good old days®" too. Many early computer games perceived as being original merely evolved out of other media (board games and arcades). Sure, *Pac Man* and *Donkey Kong* were original ideas, but how many second-rate variations did we have to endure?

Jump ahead to the 1990s. Most genres are firmly established, and in the post-*Doom* era most of what is perceived as an "original" idea has either taken place on the marketing level (shareware, demos, Lara Croft, Wal Mart designing games) or been technology driven. As an example of the latter, id Software didn't necessarily invent the first-person 3D game, but their superior technology made it more visceral than ever before. Subsequent games have evolved the basic formula, but as a whole there's been little non-technological innovation. Hence, there's a perception among many that there's little or no originality in the genre.

But is innovation really as important as we make it out to be? I'll be the first to admit I never managed to "get" some of the original games of the past few years: *Creatures* and *Galapagos*' spin on artificial life, most pretentious multimedia, the surreal console game *PaRappa the Rapper*, the whole first-person 3D/real-time strategy hybrid genre. I'm also guilty of preferring games that feel comfortable the first time I load them up, ones that seem to forsake innovation for execution.

This doesn't mean companies shouldn't strive for innovation, or that gamers shouldn't demand it. It's just time for a reality check—many of us are *incredibly* guilty of overselling originality and underrating execution.

Which brings us to our cover story. A small number of people have publicly or privately complained that *Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun* seems too much like "more of the same," that it doesn't take the real-time strategy genre to "the next level," whatever that may mean (in fact, it probably means different things to different people). Assuming Westwood doesn't completely botch the game—and the odds are pretty good they're not going to let their biggest franchise lapse—shouldn't we be ecstatic if they deliver a beautifully executed and balanced game?

After reading our article (page 106), I think it sounds pretty interesting. And I'll try it over an "original" game like *Creatures* any day of the week. ■

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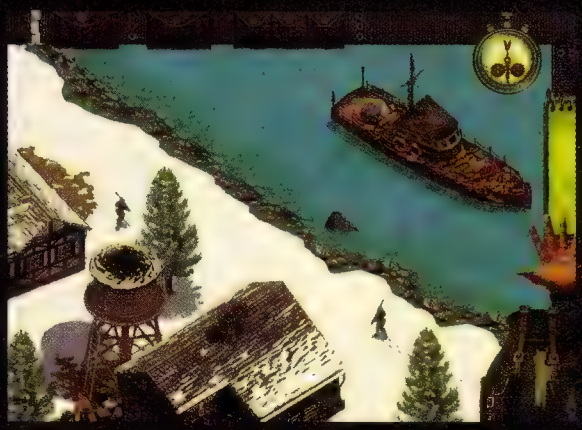

Mountain, Desert, Beach and Snow terrains

Name	Russell Hancock
A.K.A.	Inferno
Nationality	British
Primary Skill	Explosives/munitions
Background	Very quiet demeanor. Keeps to himself. Explosive temper can result in unpredictable behavior.

Name	Sir Francis Woolridge
A.K.A.	Duke
Nationality	British
Primary Skill	Marksman
Background	Cold and calculating character. His commitment to the team intensified after his sister was killed in a German bombing raid.

Name	Jerry McHale
A.K.A.	Tiny
Nationality	American
Primary Skill	Use of blades/close combat
Background	Extremely violent temper when provoked. Loves to read poetry to relax. Afraid of dogs.

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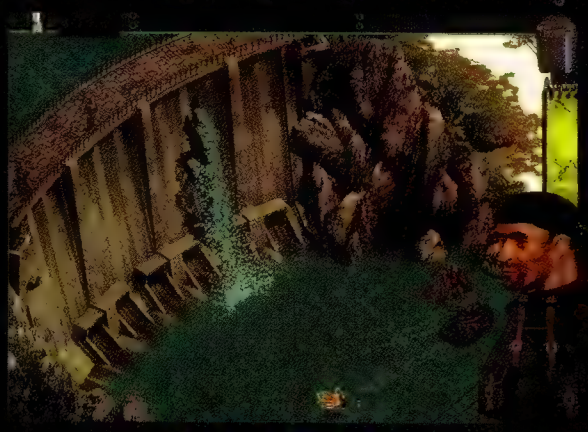

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Name	Sid Perkins
A.K.A	Tread
Nationality	American
Special Skill	Vehicle mechanic/driver
Background	Mistrustful character. Has poor relationships with teammates. Loves a fine Cuban between raids.

Name	Rene Duchamp
A.K.A	Spooky
Nationality	French
Primary Skill	Linguist
Background	Aside from an absolute hatred toward Nazis, quite an amiable character. Speaks five languages fluently. Great with women.

Name	James Blackwood
A.K.A.	Fins
Nationality	Australian
Primary Skill	Champion swimmer/sailer
Background	Dissolute character. Vows to have alcohol problem under control. Could figure out a way to make an anvil float.

Detonating this summer

COMMANDOS

BEHIND ENEMY LINES

I HAVE AN ENORMOUS TANK BATTALION.
I HAVE AN ARSENAL OF WEAPONS AT MY FINGERTIPS.
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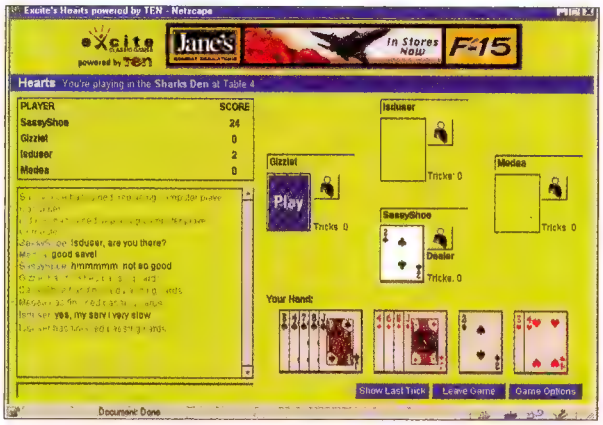
Where are you redux

"Heeeeere gamer-gamer! Won't you come out and play?!" by André Vrignaud



Hearts is just one of the classic card games being produced by TEN for Excite

In a recent column, we asked just where all the gamers were—no matter where you look, there seem to be fewer people playing online than originally expected by the gaming services a year or two ago. And we did indeed get quite a few responses from readers, a few of which are worth quoting here.

"I have been searching for an online gaming community for a while and am a member of many of them," many of you said. "However, I find however that many people are not playing the games I would like to."

This seemed to be a common thread—quite a few of you are frustrated at trying to find people to play in the games *you* wish to play. Either people are just not playing the games you want, or the maturity level of the players that are there leaves much to be desired.

The other common comment (other than the now classic "why-didn't-you-mention-Kali-you-must-hate-it-you-SuckSuckSuck!" diatribe) is the cost of playing online. To quote, "The main reason, in my opinion, for the lack of players on pay services is that many people just can't afford them. For me, even $9.99 [a month] would be too much, because I already have to pay for my Internet access and an extra phone line, not to mention the games themselves."

From these responses and many, many others, several things became clear. One is that the cost of playing games online is still prohibitive for many people. (Yes, it may seem like a "Duh," but people still feel strongly enough about it to mention it, so we pass it along.) The other issue is best illustrated by this last quote. "For us non-*Quake* types, where do we find a place that really facilitates community in the game?"

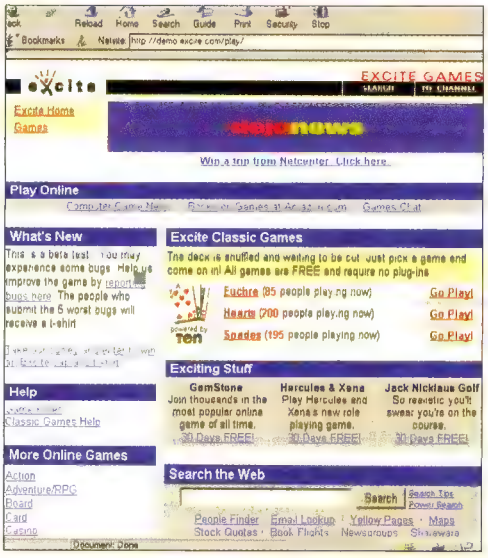
The key to note here is the use of "non-*Quake*" to describe the types of games this person likes—in other words, not hardcore action games. Quite a few people out there noted that the it often seemed as though there wasn't much space for them to play the games *they* wanted to play—especially if they weren't a hardcore gamer. (One comment was along the lines of "After all, not everybody has the superhuman reflexes of a 16-year old!")

This is obviously a bit of a problem for the online services, which have built themselves up as a destination for hardcore gamers (which until recently has been pretty much all of them). They're now finding that there just aren't that many of you out there right now, which is a problem since these services depend on users for revenue—both from subscriptions and from advertising. To address this, the services need a new business model—one that addresses the needs of not just the hardcore gamers, but also the casual. To that end, TEN recently announced a major shift in its direction by aiming to extend its reach and support casual gamers.

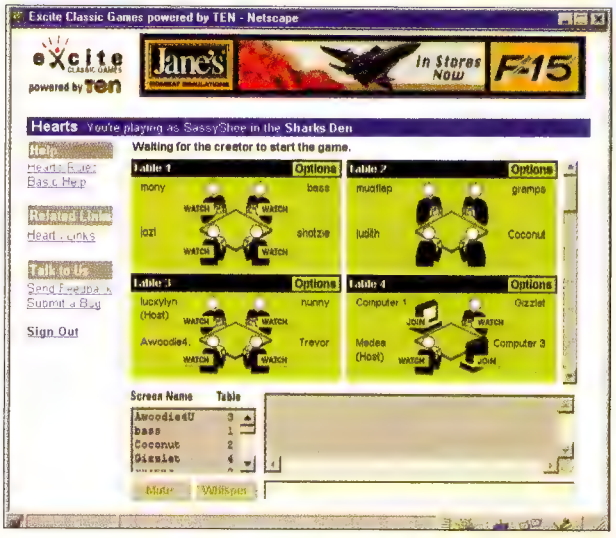
TEN has signed distribution deals with Excite and Infoseek to deliver and host casual parlor-type games (such as Hearts, Spades and Euchre) for both of the search engines. In addition, TEN plans to bring those same games online to their own service as free titles. The games themselves are Java-based, and thus run within any Java-enabled browser. TEN is also leveraging off of their new TEN 2.0 Java interface to launch and navigate within these games.

When you roll all of this up, you find a win-win situation for both casual gamers and for TEN as a service. Casual gamers have the advantage of being able to play games from their browser (without having to install any plug-ins) from the websites of either TEN, Excite, or Infoseek. TEN dramatically expands their presence on the web with the visibility they get from these search engines, but more importantly, TEN also gets to share in the advertising revenue being generated on these search engine game areas. That revenue should go a long way to helping balance the shortfall they're currently experiencing from declining membership ("pay") numbers.

Longer term, we can hope that these casual gamers will also learn to expand their horizons and experiment with some of the grander online experiences available. We have to assume that there are plenty of potential gamers out there who just haven't had a chance to be exposed to these "larger" titles. Giving them an easy start with a simple, Java-based interface and games could be just what's needed to draw them in. And should that occur, we could one day see the boom in online gaming that's been so long awaited. ■



TEN should derive quite a bit of traffic thanks to partnering with Excite's Games Channel



TEN's new Java interface continues to be streamlined and optimized to reduce download time

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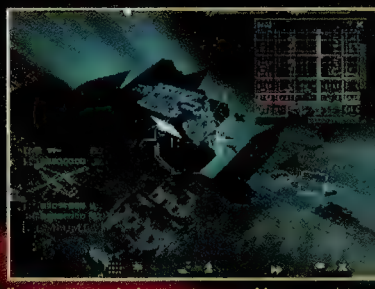

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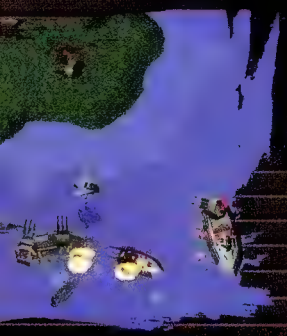

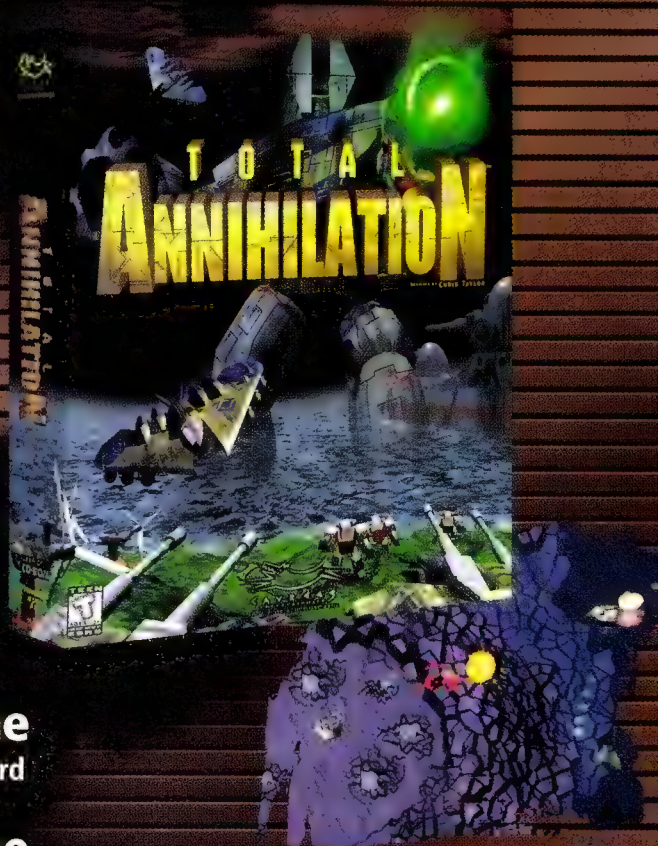

Game of the Year
–GameSpot Editors

Game of the Year
–GameSpot Reader's Choice Awards

Best Real-Time Strategy Game
–PC Gamer On-Line, Reader's Choice Award

Best Real-Time Strategy Game
–Adrenaline Vault

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–Ultra Game Player's magazine

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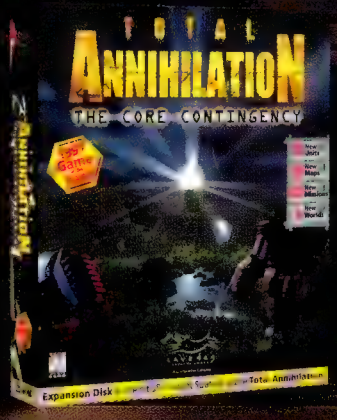

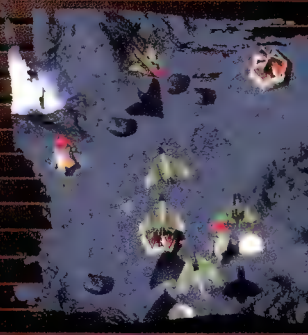

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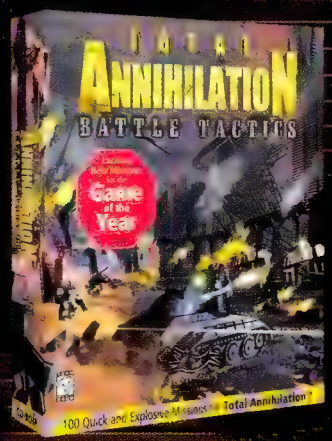


*Computer Game Entertainment

To 3D or not 3D

At E3, there was no question–by Scott Udell

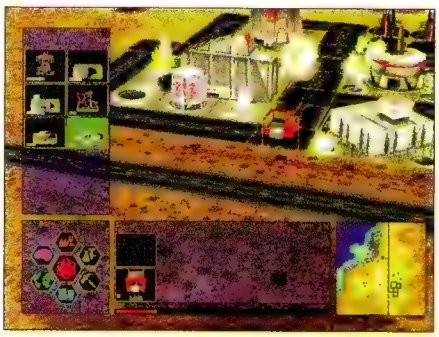
SSI's Fighting Steel uses the 3D space for more than eye candy: at night search lights will help you spot enemy ships, and ship movement indicators are displayed right in the 3D world

You'll be reading a lot about the Electronic Entertainment Expo (aka the E3 show) in the pages of this month's issue… when the electronic gaming industry has one single monster event where it shows off its wares in flashy, noisy, garish splendor, we kind of have to pay it some attention. The big trend for strategy gamers (*and* wargamers—more on that in a second) is that of 3D. Now, this trend isn't any big surprise—it's been obvious for a while—but E3 really drove it home. The question, though, is whether or not 3D in strategy games is a Good Thing. Me, I'm not convinced, at least not in all cases.

Back in 1995 *Command & Conquer* and *Warcraft II* were released, and lo, they were good things. Of course, they weren't the first to do real-time strategy (RTS), but they were the games that popularized it, and have driven much of the strategy game portion of the industry since (which has produced, unfortunately, many games that are middlin' at best). Last year *Myth* did 3D in RTS, and lo it was good. It wasn't the first to do 3D in a strategy game (remember *Shadow of the Horned Rat*?), but it was certainly popular. Now it seems like everyone is going 3D (well, I exaggerate, but not by much); whether this was in response to *Myth* or "just because" can be debated but probably doesn't matter in the long run. What *does* matter is why the 3D is being added—is it because it truly enhances gameplay, or is it for a gee-whiz factor? I fear that in many cases it's the latter, and that such gee-whizziness actually hurts gameplay. Some of the games I saw at E3 seem to be just *Clone & Conquer* games with 3D slapped on—basically, they looked like weak clones further muddled with a confusing perspective. However, none of these games are done yet, so we'll have to wait and see.

Strategy game designers aren't the only ones chanting the 3D mantra—there were at least three wargames at the show that will feature 3D (and may even require 3D accelerators to run). SSI's *Fighting Steel* has you controlling—in part—through the 3D display, and here it actually makes a bit of sense—the game covers the tail end of visual-range ship-to-ship combat, so I can imagine that a 3D representation would be meaningful (if just barely). The games that have me scratching my head are SSI's *Harpoon*[4] and Jane's *Fleet Command*. Both games cover modern naval operations, operations that almost always occur at ranges beyond (sometimes far beyond) human vision. What, then, is the use of 3D beyond eye candy? Will it help situational awareness in some fashion? Perhaps, but until I see more on these games and others I'm going to be a tad skeptical of the utility of 3D, and worried about the effect the 3D has, both on development and processor load. You may recall that when *Harpoon II* shipped it ran slowly even on the then-king of the PC world, a 90MHz Pentium; this wasn't because of graphics flash, but because of detailed (some said too detailed) internal modeling (especially missile fly-out models). I'd rather the extra 310 MHz of the now-king, a 400 MHz Pentium II, be used to speed up those models (and improve and extend gameplay) than to show me a whiz-bang 3D animation of a ship sinking that'll I'll get sick of after I see it the three hundredth time. Of course, if that 3D animation improves my gameplay experience in some way, then maybe it'll be all be worth it… but I'll wait for the proofed pudding, and in the meantime play the (non 3D) *Operational Art of War* and the (3D) *Might and Magic VI*. ■

Whether it triggered the 3D in strategy gaming craze or just happened to be the first out the door doesn't really matter; now most everyone's doing a "Myth Clone," including Bungie with Myth II (pictured)



Others, like Eidos' Warzone 2100, have Command & Conquer-like gameplay put into a 3D perspective

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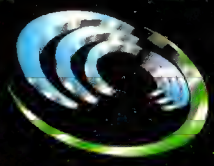

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E3 and plastic

We regretfully Lego of the 2D adventure–by Cindy Yans

In late May, with pre-E3 coverage well underway, and the show itself (described in every nook and cranny of this issue) only a few weeks away, we received a phone call from Switzer Communications, one of the PR mouthpieces of Lego Mindstorms. "Build robots out of Legos. Program them. In competition with your industry colleagues, race them through an obstacle course, round-robin style, in a prominent location at E3. It's fun. It's easy. You'll have your company logo on a banner in the entryway of the show. You don't have to be present at every race. We'll come out to personally train you to use and program the system. It's fun. It's easy. All teams will get a final copy of Lego's *Robotics Invention System*—and—a Lego wristwatch. The winning team will get a *huge* prize yet to be determined—something like a trip to Maui, a Saab convertible, a side-by-side refrigerator-freezer. It's fun! It's…"

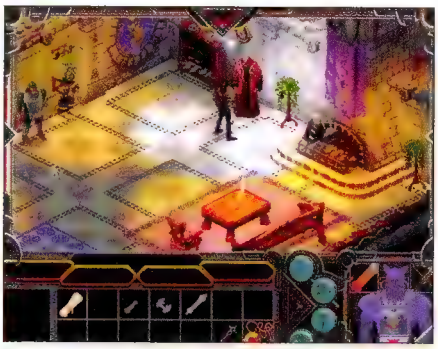
I was tempted, but not wanting to be hasty, I promised a callback and polled my coworkers. With minor enthusiasm, most agreed that it would be a cool thing to do. And as long as we didn't have to appear at every heat, we could certainly take an afternoon to train and build and program. After all, our logo would look *great* on the nice entryway banner.

The Friday afternoon before the show, in walked Lego's Anthony Fudd, our trainer. He smiled and unpacked two *Invention Systems* and spilled their contents onto our conference table. Our collective jaw hit the floor. There on the table were plastic packages containing 450 million trillion pieces of Lego equipment—blocks, wheels, treads, gears, piping, bushings, springs, cogs…the likes of which we had never imagined.

I guess we hadn't been thinking, "from scratch." Were we thinking that we'd be putting, like, an arm or other appendage on a robot shell? Mr. Fudd, it turns out, in addition to being the nicest person on the planet, is a degreed mechanical engineer from M.I.T. And we, well, we're a pretty highly-degreed group of professionals—but not a single engineer lurks among us. Not even a closet engineer (a techie with a penchant for tinkering). Well, that's not quite true. Our technical director who had *very* little time for this endeavor might be described as a closet engineer.

If the delightful Mr. Fudd hadn't traveled hundreds of miles to see us, we would have summarily dismissed him, politely withdrawing from the event. Well, actually we tried that. He wouldn't hear of it. Before our eyes in about 10 minutes, he quickly built a working model of a robot "Line Follower"—one that could be programmed to follow a dark line on a light surface. He built a rack-and-pinion steering setup. He built intricately-geared wheel-and-axle arrangements. He built a prototype for the next space shuttle. We wandered to and from the conference room, answering phones and being otherwise busily unwilling to come to terms with the fact that *someone* probably should be putting together an entry-bot—but the trillion components were incredibly intimidating.

So long, 2D point 'n' click. So long, Guybrush



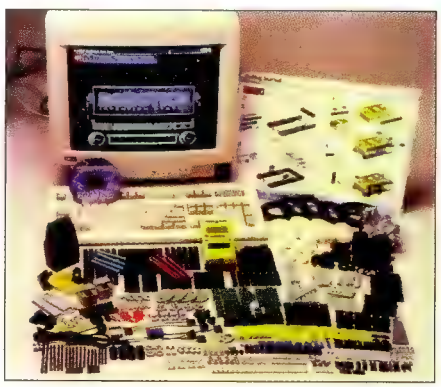
The likes of Eidos' Revenant represents the future of merging genres

Despite the fact that we were late bloomers, about seven hours and much hand-holding later, we had two robots that actually moved, but which needed tweaking and additional programming to negotiate the diagrammed obstacle course. Mr. Fudd went on his way and left us with the little guys. We worked with them for the next four or so days. We borrowed an engineer. They performed like gangbusters on the receptionist desk and in the lobby area—bumping and making 90-degree turns on cue. They were cute. They…broke en route to Atlanta. The reassembled one did not perform on the *real* course. Heat after heat it did not perform. Heat after heat it spun in circles, but actually finished a few times (purely by accident). We came in fourth. But that's OK—the grand prize was a giant trophy made out of Legos. Splendid enough, but certainly not Maui.

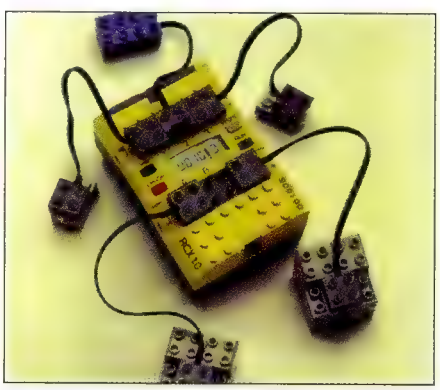
The *Robotics Invention System* really is an addictive and fabulous toy for all ages. If we had had a month or so and an engineer or two in our pockets, it might have been, er, fun…and (gulp) easy.

Plastic aside, this year's E3 showed that while RPGs are reviving from the virtual nothingness of 1996 and 1997, the traditional 2D adventure game is just about dead. There were just about zero of them being shown. *The Curse of Monkey Island* might have been the last of the breed. Instead we have many, many action/adventure hybrids—not necessarily a bad thing—and a few more attempts at full motion video interactive movies. 3D is here to stay, even in Adventureland. Tune in here soon for more discussion of the ever-merging-genre issue in adventure and role-playing games. ■

Oh, say does that Mindstorms banner yet wa-ave…



The Robotics Invention System—more than you bargained for



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Stickin' it

It's déjà vu all over again–by Ben Chiu

Does this sound familiar? Rush to Software USA and buy the hot combat sim you've anxiously been waiting for—well, the one you've been waiting for for too long a time. When you get home you rip open the shrink-wrap. (Assuming, of course, you didn't already open the box in the car. If you did, the missing card probably fell between the seats and is now located between the now fuzzy stray french-fry and .38 cents in loose change.) Once you get the puppy loaded, the next couple of hours are spent on the ritual of skimming the manual, programming your super-duper joystick, and learning the sim—all at the same time.

Okay, I'll admit it. My experiences with the latest and greatest sims tend to resemble the scenario described above. Most recently I've been playing Jane's *F-15* like an addict and it reminded me of the struggles that we all go through when we familiarize ourselves with a new sim. Although Bill "Cowboy" Wilson should be commended for cramming just about every conceivable *F-15* function into his ThurstMaster joystick program files (you'll find them on the *F-15* CD-ROM in the JOYSTICK folder), it was of little use for me. Not instinctively knowing which button does what makes it as useless as not having a stick program file in the first place. This isn't an attack on Cowboy's work and contribution, but it is an indication of a much larger issue—a lack of a joystick button standard.

We've all thought of it before. Wouldn't it be nice if every sim mapped certain functions to specific joystick hats and buttons? Theoretically, once you learned the button layout for one sim, you'd be able to jump into another and feel somewhat at home. What we all need to do is band together and come up with a joystick button standard and ram it down every developer's throat, right? Whoa! Hold on pardner!

Although ThrustMaster makes the only replica Block 50 stick around, most joysticks designed for air combat sims have similarly positioned hats and buttons like these from CH Products

Actually there are standards already out there. The government has spent no doubt millions of taxpayer dollars to develop the ergonomics and functionality of the F-16 Block 50 stick, the same one used in the latest generation F-22 Raptor fighter. Who are we to argue with what works?

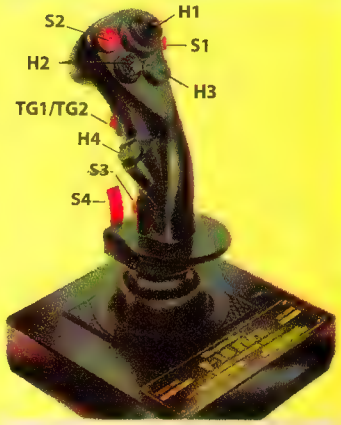
ThrustMaster's Buzz Hoffman (a former F-16 pilot) was kind enough to provide the functions for the real Block 50 stick [see sidebar "F-16 Block 50 Layout"]. Of course, the limitations of PC sims (2D display, lack of physical controls and motion, etc.) prevents them from corresponding directly with the real aircraft (and actual stick functions are classified), but some basic correlations can be made. Some suggestions for their sim counterparts are included.

The idea isn't to jam every possible function on to the stick—it isn't done like that in real life—but to put functions in standard positions. Just as you know the gas pedal will be the right pedal when you sit in any car, by mapping certain functions to specific placements an instant basic familiarity could be achieved.

The beauty of the whole thing is even though ThrustMaster makes the only replica Block 50 stick, most joysticks designed for combat sims have similarly positioned hats and buttons. Regardless, whatever buttons present should be mapped according to a standard, something beyond "trigger fires weapon 1." Since we've paid for one (through taxes), the Block 50 is as good a place to start as any. ■

F-16 Block 50 Layout

S1	=	Nose Wheel Steering / Air Refueling Disconnect / Missile Selection Switch
S2	=	Weapon Release
S3	=	Expand / FOV Button expands the field of view on the TV guided munitions such as the Mavericks (could be used to cycle through Air-to-ground munitions)
S4	=	AutoPilot Override
H1	=	Trim (cockpit views would be more critical/desirable here)
H2	=	Target Management Switch (target select, lock, IFF, etc.)
H3	=	Display Management Switch (HUD color and modes)
H4	=	Counter Measures Management Switch (chaff, flares, ECM)
TG1	=	Camera
TG2	=	Gun Trigger



F-16 FLCS and F-22 Flight Stick: The functionality of the F-16 Block 50 stick layout has been proven in the real world. Why not adopt it?

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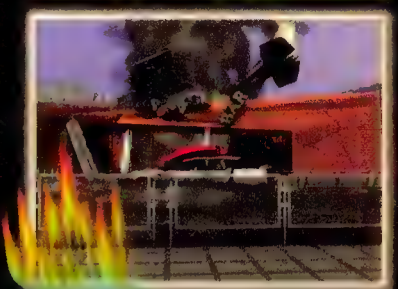
rescue units, police cars and fire engines are deployed at your command. Mobilize your units of highly specialized medical and police personnel, controlling the crews in their constant battle to save your fellow human beings.



Run to your favorite retailer or call 1-800-229-2714

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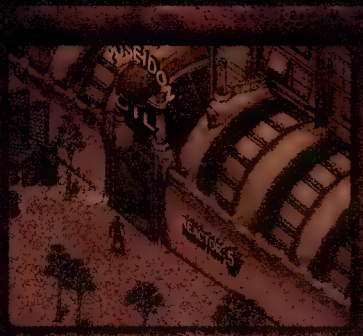
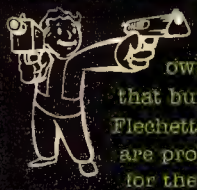


WE ARE FAMILY
Not everyone that joins you looks like you. Super-mutants, robo-dogs and ghouls may join your adventure, or why not do-it-yourself by implanting the brain of someone near-and-dear into that shiny new robot body.

KILL SMARTER, NOT HARDER
Improved combat AI for friends and foes alike. Most of the people in your own group won't take that burst shot with the Flechette-gun, but a couple are probably just aching for the opportunity.



SHARE THE WEALTH
If you want to, you can upgrade any traveling companions with more dangerous weapons, tougher armor, or even teach them new skills and abilities. Of course, you'd better make sure they're on your side.

BIGGER & BADDER THAN EVER
Bigger, smarter, nastier enemies than you've ever fought before. We've given you a few pals that are just as ugly. You didn't think you were the only Bad-ass in town did you?

SEX & ROMANCE AFTER THE BOMB
Fall in love, get married, and then pimp your spouse for a little extra chump-change. Hey, it's a dark and dangerous world.

LEARNING IS FUN-DA-MENTAL
Over 100 new skills, called perks, available to learn during the course of your travels. Better to learn the Flaming Dragon Punch from the crazed tribal shaman or how to squeeze the trigger on your spiffy new Gauss-rifle faster than the next guy? Decisions, decisions.

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CG-CDROM

Caesar III

Caesar III is one of the latest strategy titles to be created by Sierra Studios' Impressions development group. Building upon the success of the first two *Caesars, Caesar III* offers a richer, truer environment with multiple gameplay objectives.

Impressions is utilizing what they call a single level of control. All of the actions can be viewed graphically, on the main screen, as they unfold, instead of having to rely on text reports or actions on separate view screens. For example, if your city populace is rioting for food, you'll see it on your game map.

The demo allows you to play several different scenarios, each one progressing in difficulty and responsibilities.

REQUIREMENTS

Windows 95, 90MHz Pentium or higher, 16MB RAM
Sierra • www.sierra.com
Tech Support: 425-644-4343

THEY'RE RUDE, THEY'RE CRUDE

AND THEY'RE COMING TO SAVE THE WORLD THIS FALL.

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Meet the BioPunX—four funky, feisty, sarcastic critters with minds of their own starring in the spectacular new Artificial Life Sim Game from Fujitsu Interactive. Train your genetic creations by talking to them via the latest in voice recognition technology. Just make sure you have a snappy come-back to their wise-cracking insults! The fate of the world is in your hands.

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PC CD-ROM
Windows® 95-98

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You command turn of the century tanks,
battleships and observation balloons.
They command 200-foot Fighting Machines.

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It's not how big your units are, it's what you do with them. When the Martian war machine lands on the green and pleasant land of 19th century Britain, strategy is all you've got. And in this revolutionary non-linear war, you'll need it. Deploy your forces anywhere on the map of Britain. Choose your missions. Pick your battles. Because you can lose a battle and still win the War. Maybe. It's your primitive tanks against their Fighting Machines. Your biplanes against their Flying Machines. Your observation balloons against their Xeno-telepaths. 150 3D rendered units stand between you and Martian domination. Or experience strategy from the other side and play as the Martians!

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the original british invasion

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RP

Microsoft Windows 95

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GT Interactive Software

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Grim Fandango

From the creator of *Full Throttle* and *Day of the Tentacle* comes *Grim Fandango*, a surreal adventure title from LucasArts. Based on Mexican folklore, you play Manny Calavera, a travel agent in the Land of the Dead.

Employed by the Department of Death, Manny arranges for people to travel from the Land of the Living to the Land of the Dead, then engages them in a four-year journey across the underworld. This is a journey that all souls must make before finding an eternal resting place. As Manny, you'll soon discover an embezzlement ring that threatens not only your job, but the eternal destiny of your soul.

REQUIREMENTS

Windows 95, 133MHz Pentium or higher, 16MB RAM
LucasArts • www.lucasarts.com
Tech Support: 415-507-4545

KEYBOARD CONTROLS

↑ 8	Forward
↓ 2	Backward
← 4	Turn left
→ 6	Turn right
shift	Run
E	Examine
P	Pick up item/stop holding item
U	Use item/talk to character
I	Inventory
cntrl J	Toggle joystick/gamepad
cntrl T	Toggle speech mode
Pause	Pause the demo
F1	Show keyboard commands/return to demo
alt X	Exit the demo

Redjack: Revenge of the Brethren

Redjack: Revenge of the Brethren is somewhat of a hybrid title. It includes both adventure elements and pure arcade sequences in an effort to immerse the player in a physical world. You must solve puzzles and communicate with other characters, as well as battle your way past British soldiers and swashbuckling pirates.

The demo starts you off confined in a cell, awaiting your own hanging in the morning. You must use your wits and ingenuity to free yourself from the prison, then battle your way past soldiers waiting outside. Just a hint: don't get too greedy in your new found freedom.

Windows 95, 133MHz Pentium or faster, 24MB RAM • MacOS, Power PC 100 or faster, Processor 601-604, 24MB RAM
THQ • www.thq.com
Tech Support: 818-591-1310

CGCDROM INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS

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While F-16 Multirole Fighter is a stand-alone premium simulation with over 40 missions and a mission editor, it is also your ticket to NovaWorld where you can battle over 100 airplanes including MiG-29 Fulcrums™ and F22 Raptors™ flown by the most devastating opponents – Your friends.

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Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines

A real-time tactical strategy game, *Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines* puts you in control of up to six Allied soldiers doing covert operations during World War II. Touting a strong artificial intelligence and beautifully rendered graphics, *Commandos* already has the strategy community excited.

Order your Commando to crawl on his stomach, under the cover of bushes, for hundreds of yards, to silently take out a guard at his post with a knife. Watch German patrols leave footprints in the snow as they goose-step past your hiding place.

Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines is truly an aggressive title that any tactical gamer should consider. This demo will let you get acquainted with some of the gameplay features in the full retail version.

REQUIREMENTS

Windows 95, 120MHz Pentium, 16MB RAM
Eidos • www.eidos.com
Tech Support: 415-547-1244

101st Airborne in Normandy

Empire's turn-based tactical strategy/wargame title, *101st Airborne in Normandy* puts you in control of 18 paratroopers behind enemy lines during the D-Day landings at Normandy. You can choose your team from a selection of 82 unique soldiers, each having proficiencies in 13 different areas of combat.

Not only do you have to worry about parachuting down into enemy territory and taking out Germans, you also have to care for your wounded, conserve your ammunition, stay on course, and even find food for your soldiers.

NOTE: *The 101st Airborne in Normandy requires 24 bit color for the magazine demo version. In this version, if your video card supports 16 & 32 bit modes, but lacks 24 bit, the game will not work properly. The full version will work with all color depths.*

REQUIREMENTS

Windows 95, 133MHz Pentium or higher, 66 MB RAM
Empire • www.empire-us.com
Tech Support:800-216-9706

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FLY WHAT WE FEARED

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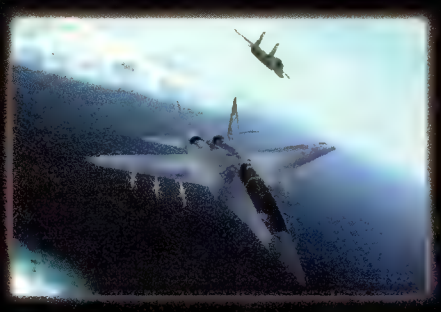
ACTUAL SCREEN SHOTS



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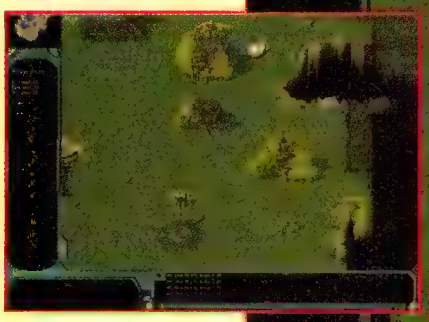
Cyberstorm 2: Corporate Wars

A few years ago, Sierra released the successful *Mission Force: Cyberstorm*. Now they've prepared a sequel, *Cyberstorm 2: Corporate Wars*. This strategy title is more in-depth now; while it includes a real-time mode it retains a turn-based system too, and the developers have tried to retain the scope of turn-based titles of the past. There are technologies to be researched, 27 different vehicle chassis upon which to build, and 300 different devices and weapons to put on those vehicles. There's also a sophisticated mission generator to create new battlefields and new opponents, so no two campaigns are alike. This demo includes a few training missions to give you a feel of what to expect from the full game.



REQUIREMENTS

Windows 95, 133MHz Pentium, 24MB RAM
Sierra • www.sierra.com
Tech Support: 425-644-4343

Need For Speed III

Electronic Arts continues its arcade racing series with *Need For Speed III*. Each game in this series has steadily built on the success of its predecessor, and this one is no exception. Everything from the physics to the graphics have been improved and polished… And we mean polished, literally—some of the cars now have shiny paint finishes that reflect the game world around them.

In the full version, you'll be able to drive eight incredible sports cars, with five different gameplay modes. This demo lets you cruise one course in your Lamborghini Countach while trying to outrun a few cops and another Lamborghini.

KEYBOARD CONTROLS

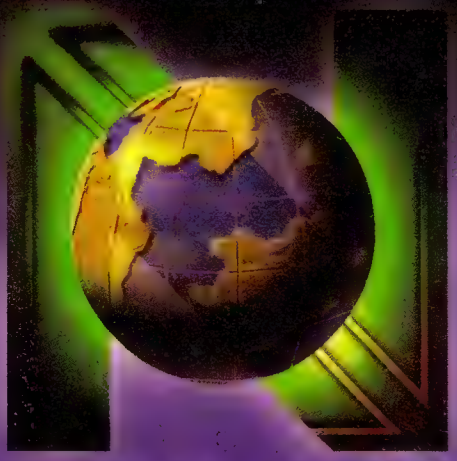
↑	Accelerate
↓	Brake
←	Steer left
→	Steer right
Space Bar	Hand brake
A	Shift up
Z	Shift down
C	Camera
H	Horn
B	Look behind
X	Cruise
L	Lights

REQUIREMENTS

Windows 95, 166MHz Pentium, 16MB RAM
Electronic Arts • www.ea.com

This isn't a *Dating Service*

This is where you SCORE!



"NovaLogic's programmers did a superb job with the multiplayer code— even in games with over 30 players, there was no perceptible lag in close-in combat."

"IT'S A BLAST."

—Computer Gaming World

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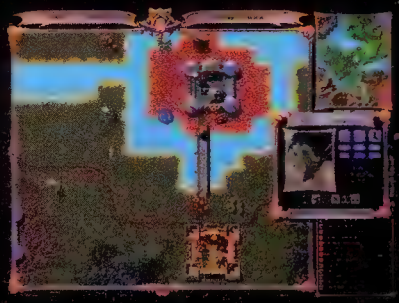
Go there. It is your last hope to conquer the truly wicked. www.warlords3.com

A pall of unspeakable evil, merciless slaughter and unbridled destruction has fallen across the Realm of Etheria. The servants of evil, the Darklords, spread like a contagion across the land. Will you be able to stop their unholy juggernaut?



Welcome to *Darklords Rising*, the greatly anticipated sequel to *Warlords III: Reign of Heroes*, 1997's turn-based strategy game of the year.

The sequel to 1997's Turn-Based Strategy Game of the Year.

Discover the bigger, deeper, darker universe of *Darklords Rising*:

- 4 entirely new campaigns and 15 new scenarios
- 31 new army types, for a total of 95
- 5 new uniquely skilled heroes for a total of 15
- 9 new multiplayer games including Crusade, North vs. South and Instant Chaos
- More challenging, adaptable and aggressive AI
- Fully functional map, item and campaign editor
- Bonus: Includes original campaign and scenarios from *Warlords III: Reign of Heroes*

In short, more adventure, deeper gameplay and fewer chances for survival.

WARLORDS III
DARKLORDS RISING

REDORB

PREVIEWS

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>Atlanta, May 28-30, 1998

Within these pages you will find the most comprehensive round-up of games shown at the 1998 Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3). Most are scheduled to appear on store shelves between now and the end of 1999. Sorted by company, each game is listed with its genre, "Pitch" (what it's about), "Picture" of what it's like, and its release date (don't hold your breath). Enjoy. Reporting by: John Altman, Steve Bauman, Tom Chick, Jeff Lackey, Robert Mayer, Jason Ocampo, Benjamin Sones, Scott Udell and Cindy Yans.

This article brought to you live from the Electronic Entertainment Expo

E3 98: A showcase for the year's biggest games

NEW WORLD COMPUTING

HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC III

GENRE» Turn-based Strategy

PITCH» The latest version of this award-winning series, subtitled *The Restoration of Erathia*, takes place five years after the previous game. A new campaign takes the player to Erathia, where you'll discover the plot behind the murdered king, free him from his undead body and restore the queen's power.

Gameplay-wise, there will be a number of tweaks to the venerable engine that powered the previous games. The computer AI will now remove poor creatures in their castles and replace them with stronger ones. Both computer and human players will be forced to rebuild their castles after an attack. The game will have 24 heroes of eight types, with more evil heroes and new evolving characters (more role-playing-esque, with specialized skills and inventory directly from *Might and Magic VI*). Combat is being expanded to include more hexes, and overall pathfinding is being improved.

On the multiplayer front, 3DO is considering an Internet lobby and meeting room—regardless, multiplayer games will be easier to set up, and the game will be available for play on unspecified online services. The best news is that players will be able to check out their units and kingdom while awaiting the other player to complete their turn. This should enhance the flow of the multiplayer game.

The visuals have switched from the extremely cartoon-like visuals found in the previous games to a slightly more somber and subdued look. They are now rendered (as opposed to hand-drawn) in 16-bit color. The game now runs at a fixed higher resolution (800x600).

PICTURE» Everything you liked about the previous game

RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

Heroes Of Might and Magic III

3DO

CODEMASTERS

TOCA: TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

GENRE» Racing

PITCH» This game features race cars that look just like actual European production models. Cars included in the game are the Audi A4, Honda Accord, Volvo S40, Peugeot 406, Renault Laguna, Ford Mondeo, Nissan Primera and Vauxhall Vectra.

PICTURE» NASCAR with even weirder accents

RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

CYCLONE STUDIOS

REQUIEM: WRATH OF THE FALLEN

GENRE» 3D Action/Adventure

PITCH» Inspired by Milton, *Requiem* marries competitive 3D technology with a unique and interesting story. You're an angel in Creation who must combat the Fallen using a variety of secular weapons and divine abilities. Previewed in issue 92.

PICTURE» The other 3D shooters touting advanced AI and a plot

RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

UPRISING II

GENRE» 3D Action/Strategy

PITCH» Picking up where the award-winning prequel left off, the sequel will be better designed for new players, with stronger tutorials and more of a linear build-up in the difficulty of the campaign game. An alien menace has been added, and it features a tuned-up 3D engine and a better integrated multiplayer game.

PICTURE» *Uprising*, only more approachable

RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

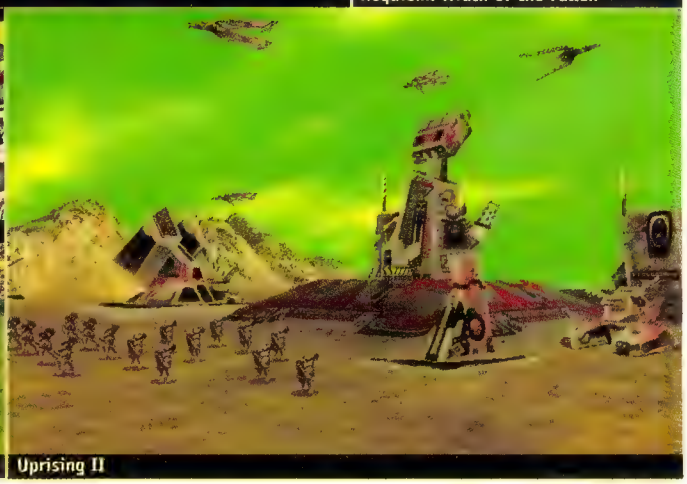
Beneath

StarCon

Requiem: Wrath of the Fallen

TOCA: Touring Car Championship

NFL Quarterback Club '99


Uprising II

NEW WORLD COMPUTING

MIGHT AND MAGIC VII
GENRE» Role-playing
PITCH» The latest version of this legendary series will pick up where the last one left off. The game will take place in a new continent near Enroth and will feature an improved 3D accelerated engine, a customizable keyboard and a more advanced civilian AI.
PICTURE» Everything you liked about the previous game
RELEASE DATE» March 1999

TEAM .366

HIGH HEAT 2000
GENRE» Sports
PITCH» The industry's best playing baseball game gets the polygon graphics, multiplayer, managing and a career mode.
PICTURE» The ghost of *Earl Weaver Baseball* hovers overhead...
RELEASE DATE» Spring 1999

ACCLAIM

MACHINES
GENRE» 3D Action/Strategy
PITCH» In the future, mankind creates some robot probes which become sentient and decide to blow each other up. Players develop hardware, software and scavenge for parts in their quest for dominance.
PICTURE» *'Bot & Conquer*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB '99
GENRE» Sports
PITCH» A polygon engine powers this game, and the AI is via Charlie Weis of the New York Jets (is that a good thing?).
PICTURE» Squareball
RELEASE DATE» September 1998

SHADOWMAN
GENRE» 3D Action
PITCH» You're a New Orleans hitman who conveniently is also a voodoo guru. You need to save the world by going back and forth from our reality to one known as Deadside.
PICTURE» Voodoo meets voodoos
RELEASE DATE» 1999

SOUTH PARK
GENRE» Profanity-spewing Children's Software
PITCH» Hang out with Kenny, Kyle, Stan and Cartman.
PICTURE» Stop this license before it sucks (the life out of the show)
RELEASE DATE» 1999

TUROK 2: SEEDS OF EVIL
GENRE» 3D Action
PITCH» Powered by parts of the *Forsaken* technology, our man Turok may not be stuck in the fog any more. More levels, more cool creatures, multiplayer, lions and tigers and bears, oh my!
PICTURE» Lots of potential
RELEASE DATE» October 1998

ACCOLADE

REDLINE
GENRE» 3D Action/Racing
PITCH» Gang warfare in the year 2066; wreak 3D havoc on foot and on wheels.
PICTURE» In their own words: "*Goldeneye* meets *Interstate 76*"
RELEASE DATE» November 1998

SLAVE ZERO
GENRE» 3D Action/Adventure
PITCH» Really big robots trample pedestrians and clash mightily in a futuristic city.
PICTURE» *Toyz In the Hood*
RELEASE DATE» March 1999

STARCON
GENRE» Space Action
PITCH» The latest in the *Star Control* series jettisons strategy to focus on pumping up the volume.
PICTURE» *Colony Wars* on your PC—or *X-COM: Interceptor* without the brains
RELEASE DATE» March 1999

TEST DRIVE 5
GENRE» Racing
PITCH» A new engine (shared with *Slave Zero*); same classic-versus-contemporary motif.
PICTURE» *Happy Days* versus *Knight Rider*
RELEASE DATE» November 1998

TEST DRIVE: OFF ROAD 2
GENRE» Racing
PITCH» Screw the critics! Lowbrow fantasy racing picks up where *Off Road 1* left off.
PICTURE» The *Test Drive 4* engine and an utter lack of pretension—or is that ambition?
RELEASE DATE» November 1998

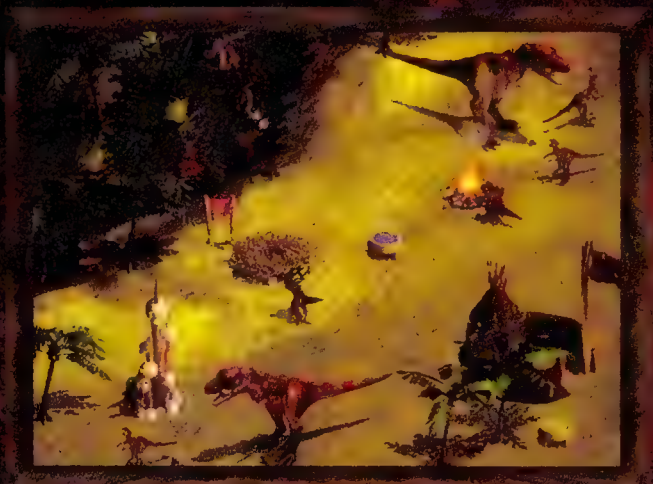
ACTIVISION

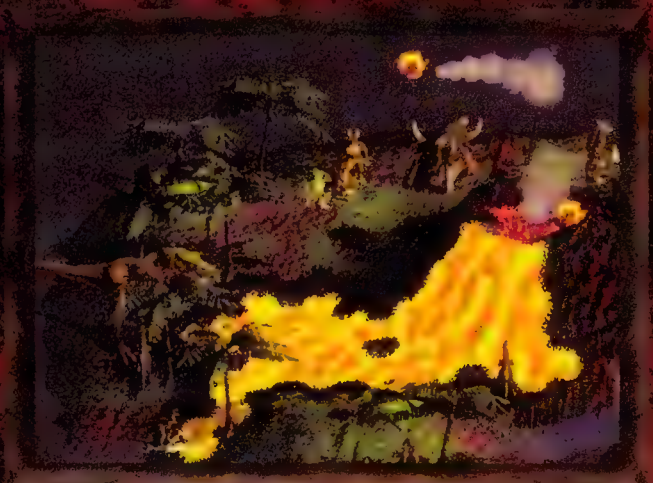
ASTEROIDS
GENRE» Retro Space Shooter
PITCH» The modern version of the classic will try to replicate the dodging and firing action of the original, but will add 3D graphics, bigger playing fields, more and more difficult space dangers and several optional play modes.
PICTURE» Duh, *Asteroids* in 3D
RELEASE DATE» November 1998

BENEATH
GENRE» 3D Action/Adventure
PITCH» From *Journeyman Project* developer Presto Studios comes an impressive looking *Tomb Raider*-style game set in the Arctic. Twelve levels of frozen caverns, hot volcanic mines, and the requisite mysterious underground city make their appearance, as will a host of denizens of the Arctic underworld.
PICTURE» "It's beginning to look a lot like Lara..."
RELEASE DATE» Spring 1999

CIVILIZATION: CALL TO POWER
GENRE» Turn-based Strategy
PITCH» Retaining the heart of the MicroProse version of the game, Activision has given their "official" version of *Civilization* a more refined *Age of Empires*-style look while evolving the classic gameplay. Look for lots of minor improvements (as if *Civilization* needed major changes) and interface improvements taken from real-time strategy games (production queues, city building profiles, etc.).
PICTURE» The next *Civilization*—'nuff said
RELEASE DATE» Spring 1999

DARK REIGN II
GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PITCH» While the original couldn't quite live up to its advanced billing (what could?), the sequel





RATING PENDING
RP
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goes a different route than games like *Age of Empires II* and *Total Annihilation: Kingdoms*. It features an all-new 3D engine *à la* Bungie's *Myth*, with polygonal units replacing that game's sprites.
PICTURE» *Myth Reign*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1999

FIGHTER SQUADRON: THE SCREAMIN' DEMONS OVER EUROPE

GENRE» Flight Simulation
PITCH» This long-delayed game looked spectacular a year ago and now looks merely competitive, at least visually speaking. However, the physics-based flight model may be just what the sim-doctor ordered.
PICTURE» The other 233 WWII flight sims scheduled for the next year or so
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

HEAVY GEAR II

GENRE» Big Robot Action
PITCH» Well, it certainly *looks* a helluva lot better than the first game, sporting an all-new engine that supports all current 3D cards. The AI is allegedly bolstered by improved squad-based tactics.
PICTURE» The big-robot stomp
RELEASE DATE» November 1998

HERETIC II

GENRE» 3D Action
PITCH» Yet more Raven-designed exploitation of id's engine technology, *Heretic II* adopts *Quake II* as its sugar daddy and proceeds to transform it into a third-person sequel to *Heretic*. Magic is the main weapon here, with all sorts of colored-lighting spell effects and incantations like Sphere of Annihilation and the trusty Fireball ready to convince your opponents of the error of their ways.
PICTURE» The demon offspring of a *Diablo*-obsessed *Quake* and *Tomb Raider* fan
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

INTERSTATE '82

GENRE» New Wave-y Vehicular Mayhem and Action
PITCH» The sequel to the ultra-funky *Interstate '76* will offer more than just auto-vigilantism, promising helicopters, motorcycles, and foot-based combat. Some of the highlights: scream through a shopping mall Blues Brothers-style at over 100mph, duke it out with biker gangs on the Strip in Vegas, and battle evildoers at a top-secret military base. No word whether the soundtrack will feature Depeche Mode and Duran Duran.
PICTURE» *Interstate '76* with a really bad haircut and a skinny tie
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS: RONIN

GENRE» Action/Role-playing
PITCH» Players take on the roles of samurai setting out on a quest to find the seven parts of a sacred artifact. The game emphasizes magic and *kenjutsu*, a Japanese fighting art.
PICTURE» *Diablo* goes to Japan
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

QUAKE ARENA

GENRE» 3D Action
PITCH» id dropped a bombshell post-E3 when John Carmack announced that this game would primarily be an online-only game. Bots will simulate deathmatch games in the solo game, and Carmack plans on focusing the 3D technology on things that won't affect multiplayer, so those expecting *Unreal*-style beauty may be disappointed.
PICTURE» Wither *Quake*?
RELEASE DATE» 1999

QUAKE II MISSION PACK: GROUND ZERO

GENRE» 3D Action
PITCH» Developed by Rogue Entertainment, creators of the *Dissolution of Eternity* add-on, it adds 15 levels, new monsters and weapons.
PICTURE» Here's a stretch: *Quake II*! Wow!
RELEASE DATE» September 1998

SIN

GENRE» 3D Action
PITCH» You're a future cop battling beautiful industrialist Elexis Sinclair, a woman with a penchant for eugenics through drugs, and whose testing has bred a horde of mutants to help carry out her plans on an unsuspecting populace. Previewed in issue 86.
PICTURE» The other 3D shooters touting advanced AI and a plot
RELEASE DATE» Summer 1998

THIRD WORLD

GENRE» Oh dear. Action/Role-playing/Real-time Strategy
PITCH» Former Blizzard designer Ron Millar returns with a game based on the ever-popular "the world goes to hell and biker gangs take over" premise. Assemble gangs from five distinct groups and battle it out in a real-time, 3D tactical combat system with a fully rotatable camera. The game will feature random scenarios, 2-8 player multiplayer games and in-depth character generation.
PICTURE» *Syndicate Wars* meets *X-COM*in a post-nuclear bar
RELEASE DATE» Spring 1999

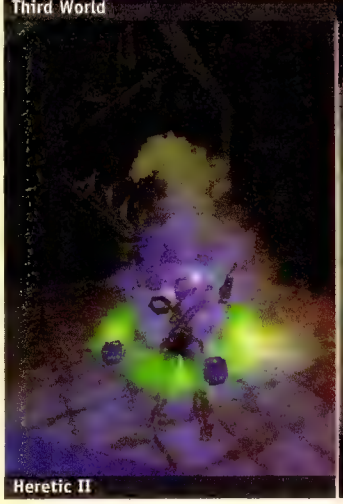
VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE

GENRE» Role-playing
PITCH» After a couple of abortive products, the card game from White Wolf finally makes it way to the PC. Developed by Nihilistic, it's a 3D role-playing game (the name is a working title) set in the game's universe.
PICTURE» It'll suck blood, literally
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1999

Third World

Heavy Gear II

Interstate '82

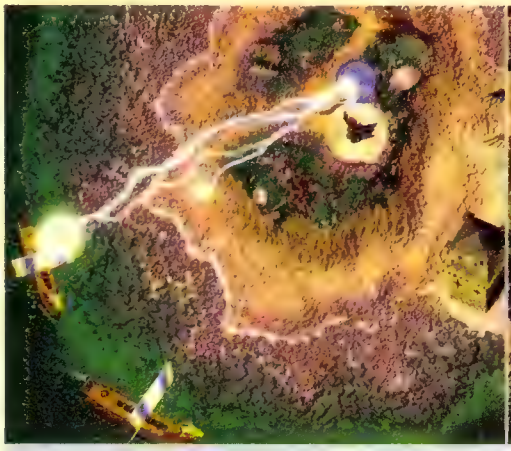

Heretic II

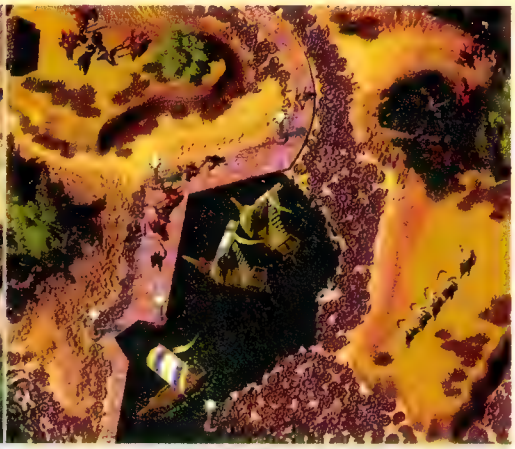
Diablo II

BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT

DIABLO II

GENRE» Action/Role-playing
PITCH» Why mess with a good thing? The sequel to 1997's biggest game features gameplay that will essentially remain the same, but the RPG aspects will be ramped up. There will be more character interaction and NPC (non-player character) interaction and varying quests. Once again you're going after Diablo, this time with five new classes of heroes. The levels are now dubbed "acts," and they're much larger than they





CAVEDOG

TOTAL ANNIHILATION: KINGDOMS

GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PITCH» The second full game from Cavedog, *Kingdoms* is set some 10,000 years earlier than *Total Annihilation*, back in a time when magic ruled the day and technology followed brutishly along. While the game's controls will be familiar—it is based on a modified version of the *Total Annihilation* engine (and it's *not Total Annihilation II*, which is a separate project Cavedog is mum about)—the fantasy setting should make the feel quite different.

In the game there are four sides based on the elements: earth, air, wind, and fire. Each side will sport units and combat philosophies in line with its element: air, for example, will have lots of flying creatures and other living things but few structures, while earth will have "good, solid, whole-grain ground warfare—fortifications, towers, catapults, etc." Despite the seeming uniqueness of an element, there are factions within each elemental power, which lets the team set up scenarios with multiple elemental powers teamed up against their own kin. Magic will play a big part—wizardly spells will be some of the most potent tools in your arsenal. The resource management will revolve around mana (magical energy) and mogrium (magical crystals), and deities may drop by once in a while to add a little spice to your fantastical life.
PICTURE» *Total Annihilation* in a *ménage à trois* with *Warcraft* and *Lords of Magic*
RELEASE DATE» Spring 1999

Total Annihilation: Kingdoms

were in the first game. Previewed in issue 91.
PICTURE» What every *Diablo* clone wishes it could be
RELEASE DATE» Spring 1999

BLUE BYTE

THE SETTLERS III

GENRE» Strategy
PITCH» Shepherd the development of your tribe across a number of scenarios. This third iteration of the series includes a larger combat component in addition to the building phase.
PICTURE» *Civ*, *Populous*, and *Age of Empires*, shaken not stirred
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

SHADOWPACT

GENRE» Strategy
PITCH» Lead your mysterious organization as you fight other shadowy groups for world domination (or whatever it is you're after).
PICTURE» Cthulhu meets *Illuminati*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

BUNGIE SOFTWARE

MYTH II: SOULBLIGHTER

GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PITCH» The game that kicked off the use of 3D in RTS games gets its sequel. The game technology's been pumped up, there are new settings (including indoors), and the storyline of the original is carried forward. Previewed in issue 92.
PICTURE» *Myth I...*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

ONI

GENRE» 3D Action/Adventure
PITCH» Police operative Konoko fights (and shoots) her way through a dark, near-future cyberpunk world.
PICTURE» *Bushido Blade* meets *Tomb Raider* (you wish)
RELEASE DATE» TBD

CAVEDOG

AMEN: THE AWAKENING

GENRE» 3D Action/adventure
PITCH» The end of civilization is nigh, and it's up to you to shoot and puzzle your way through to that end.
PICTURE» *System Shock* gets totally annihilated, or something like that
RELEASE DATE» 1999

ELYSIUM

GENRE» Role-playing/Adventure
PITCH» Follow a number of characters through a series of "episodes" in the world beyond dreams. Each

The Settlers III

Elysium

Shadowpact

Amen: The Awakening

Myth II: Soulblighter

GRAND PRIX LEGENDS™

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episode will take 5-20 hours to play, and each will have a different feel; while the initial game will come with seven episodes, the full story won't be told until 3-5 years and another 33 episodes later. The project is headed up by *Betrayal at Krondor* mastermind John Cutter.
PICTURE» A fantasy *X-Files* on your PC
RELEASE DATE» 1999

GOOD & EVIL
GENRE» Adventure/Role-playing
PITCH» Ron Gilbert returns to gaming as he lets the gamer explore a variety of strange 3D worlds (viewed from overhead). About the only thing that will tie this to earlier Gilbert adventures is the humor.
PICTURE» A three-headed monkey
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1999

TOTAL ANNIHILATION II
GENRE» TBD
PITCH» While they will admit to the game, Cavedog is being tight-lipped about it; all they'll say is that "there will be a whole new engine built from the ground up, completely different. It's not based on anything you've seen in *TA* so far."
PICTURE» Yourself in a boat on a river, with tangerine trees and marmalade skies...
RELEASE DATE» TBD

TOTAL ANNIHILATION: BATTLE TACTICS
GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PITCH» The second add-on disc for *Total Annihilation*, *Battle Tactics* features 100 smaller, more focused missions aimed especially at beginning RTS gamers or those who just want to play a bit on their lunch break.
PICTURE» *Total Annihilation* with a helping hand
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

CRUSADERS STUDIOS

AKULA: RED HUNTER
GENRE» Submarine Simulation
PITCH» Command a Russian sub in this undersea warfare simulation.
PICTURE» *688(I)*-ski
RELEASE DATE» 1999

CNO 1941
GENRE» Wargame
PITCH» Take command of combat operations (or at least naval ones) in the Pacific during WW II.
PICTURE» *War in the Pacific*
RELEASE DATE» 1999

GREYHOUNDS OF THE SEA
GENRE» Wargame
PITCH» Lead the political-military development of your nation's navy as you build up to fight WW I, then conduct tactical actions on the High Seas.
PICTURE» *Harpoon* with politics
RELEASE DATE» Summer 1998

Starsiege Tribes

Tomb Raider III

Revenant

Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines

Trespasser

Omikron

DREAMWORKS

TRESPASSER
GENRE» Action/Adventure
PITCH» Journey to Jurassic Park Site B, where a woman known simply as Anne crash lands and finds that she is, scarily enough, not so alone. A physics-intensive engine turns out some awesome looking dinosaurs for 3D first person open ended, freeform combat and puzzle solving.
PICTURE» Spielberg on steroids
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

DYNAMIX

ACES OF THE PACIFIC II
GENRE» Flight Simulation
PITCH» Dynamix returns to its legendary Aces series.
PICTURE» The original game with modern technology
RELEASE DATE» 1999

STARSIEGE
GENRE» Big Robot Action
PITCH» The single player game should contain about 45 campaign missions, which take place on eight different planetary environments complete with their own weather systems. More than 30 different vehicles in three different classes will be included, as players will be able to duke it out in Hercs, tanks, or aircraft.
PICTURE» The game formerly known as *EarthSiege*
RELEASE DATE» September 1998

STARSIEGE TRIBES
GENRE» 3D Action
PITCH» This graphically impressive third-person shooter features seamless indoor-to-outdoor environments with missions that focus on squad-level, goal-oriented game play. While its focus is on multiplayer, there will be single-player training missions to get novices up to speed.
PICTURE» *Outwars* and *Terra Nova* get *Quake*-ed
RELEASE DATE» November 1998

EIDOS INTERACTIVE

COMMANDOS: BEHIND ENEMY LINES
GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PITCH» Take a group of six soldiers through a variety of Hollywood-style missions set in Africa and Europe during World War II. You must make use of the skills of the team members available for a mission to work through the tactical puzzles.
Previewed in issue 92.
PICTURE» *Commando & Conquer*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

GANGSTERS
GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PICTURE» Set in the 1920s, in a place suspiciously like Chicago, commit crime for fun and profit as you try to build up your industry by using those old crowd favorites: extortion, intimidation and bribery. Just like the game business.
PICTURE» *Syndicate* with an M.B.A
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

OMIKRON
GENRE» 3D Action/Adventure
PICTURE» Like Eidos' own *Tomb Raider*, *Omikron* will feature prodigious 3D... environments. Eidos boasts that this French-developed game will have the story depth of a traditional adventure game, the longevity and exploration of *Tomb Raider*, and multiple RPG elements as well.
PICTURE» *La Raideur de la Tombe*
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

REVENANT
GENRE» Role-playing/Action
PITCH» The daughter of the ruler of Ahkuilon (say that six times fast) needs rescuing; you've got the job, and a tough one it is. One problem:

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you're dead. Never fear, though; the Warlord has brought you back to life, and hey, you owe him.
PICTURE» *Mortal Kombat* meets *Might and Magic*?
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

TARTAN ARMY
GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PITCH» This game looks to the historical past for inspiration. Promising a 3D graphics engine, real-time motion capture, and realistic combat, it offers gamers a chance to make the world safe for haggis and men in skirts.
PICTURE» *Kilt & Conquer*
RELEASE DATE» Spring 1999

TOMB RAIDER III: ADVENTURES OF LARA CROFT
GENRE» 3D Action
PITCH» Lara returns, running and jumping her way from the deserts of Nevada to the islands of the South Pacific. Expect new costumes (wow!) and moves, plus tweaks to the 3D engine, including a new landscaping system (fewer blocks), transparencies, weather effects, moving water and that old crowd favorite, multi-colored lighting.
PICTURE» The game every competitor wishes it could be
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

URBAN CHAOS
GENRE» 3D Action
PITCH» From the unfortunately named Mucky Foot, a group of ex-Bullfrog folks based in the U.K, you control a female character that runs around beautifully rendered 3D environments blowing stuff up.
PICTURE» *Syndicate Wars* with more estrogen
RELEASE DATE» Spring 1999

WARZONE 2100
GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PITCH» The setting is a post-nuclear holocaust world, and players will duke it out across accelerated, gouraud-shaded 3D maps, following the action with a rotatable, zoomable camera that should provide an endless variety of ways to watch the tanks rush.
PICTURE» *Nuke & Conquer*
RELEASE DATE» Spring 1999

ELECTRONIC ARTS

BULLFROG

POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING
GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PITCH» Play god as you command true believers while competing against other gods and their followers. You will find the usual assortment of immortal souls, reincarnation and godly retribution at your divine disposal, as well as the ability to build settlements and cast spells. Previewed in issue 84.
PICTURE» *Populous & Conquer*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

DUNGEON KEEPER 2
GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PITCH» Once again you're the dungeon keeper, trying to spread your foul pestilence upon an unsuspecting world. Improvements include a superior first-person mode, full 3D graphics, new rooms, an expanded bestiary, some interface improvements and more tactical options. On the multiplayer front, Bullfrog will be adding a feature promised, but not delivered, in the original—human hero vs. human keeper, with both deathmatch head-to-head modes as well as co-op play.
PICTURE» *Demon & Conquer*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

EA SPORTS

KNOCKOUT KINGS
GENRE» Sports
PITCH» It's about time. *Knockout Kings* features 38 boxers, including Muhammad Ali, Evander Holyfield, Sugar Ray Leonard and Oscar De La Hoya. Fight enthusiasts can compete as or against these legends. Referee Mills Lane served as the model for the game's official and as a consultant on the game.
PICTURE» *4D Boxing 99*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

MADDEN NFL 99
GENRE» Sports
PITCH» The new version of the game is rather square looking—*Madden* has gone polygonal, baby. Lots of polygons. With that technological improvement comes tons of slick animations, from player heads that track the ball in the air to receivers dragging their toes on a sideline catch. Improved AI and a "dynasty" round out the new features.
PICTURE» The game *Madden 98* should have been
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

NBA LIVE 99
GENRE» Sports
PITCH» The new version improves the terrifyingly real graphics of the original. New gameplay improvements include general manager and career modes (though the NBA license precludes them from including salaries), a true one-player practice mode, enhanced AI, new moves and dunks and 350 player faces.
PICTURE» Where's the trash-talk interface?
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

NCAA FOOTBALL 99
GENRE» Sports
PITCH» Sporting a full 3D polygonal engine *à la Madden 99*, it adds the dynasty mode dropped from the previous version but leaves in all of the groovy sounds and atmosphere.
PICTURE» "Whoah nellie…"
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

NHL 99
GENRE» Sports
PITCH» Improved graphics, a dynasty mode, beginner skill levels, and enhanced puck physics round out the feature-set of the latest version of this popular series. The coaching strategies are via Stanley Cup winning Coach Marc Crawford of the Colorado Avalanche.
PICTURE» Ice, ice baby
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1999

TIGER WOODS 99
GENRE» Sports
PITCH» Hit the links with the PGA Tour's "Player of the Year" for 1997,

ALLISON IS HAVING THE ULTIMATE BAD HARE DAY.
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JANE'S COMBAT SIMULATIONS

PLANES FOR THEN AND NOW

Jane's Combat Simulations has a split personality, torn between the complex sophistication of Andy Hollis' *F-15* and *Longbow* titles on one hand, and the user-friendly streamlined entertainment of Paul Grace's *US Navy Fighters* and *ATF* series on the other. Their newest simulations, *Israeli Air Combat* and *WWII Fighters*, hope to bridge the gap between these extremes.

When asked about the importance of realism as opposed to mass appeal, Grace says, "I don't think there's a conflict. There's a decision you have to make about how much depth you want to include, but that's mainly a matter of how much time you have. We focus here on trying to model combat, and not just aircraft." He says both upcoming sims are "very much, design-wise, like *US Navy Fighters*, but with enhanced detail."

ISRAELI AIR COMBAT

GENRE» Flight Simulation

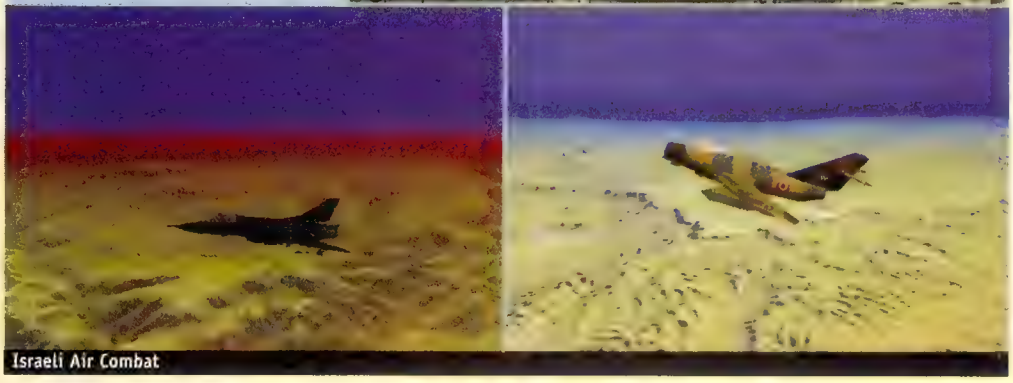
PITCH» The first title to hit the shelves will probably be *Israeli Air Combat*, barring any upheaval in the Middle East. "If anything should happen over there," says Ed Gwynn, the game's producer, "we'd lose most of Pixel Multimedia, [the development company]. They'd have to go take care of some business and we'd be second priority for a while." Each of the guys at Pixel, a team in Tel Aviv, has either been in Israel's air force or is still active. Gwynn says this gives them first-hand knowledge of the subject matter. "They've even had to pull some information back for security reasons. The executive producer was telling me she's convinced the president could go to jail," he joked.

Israeli Air Combat will include three historical campaigns (The Six Days War, Yom Kippur, and The Lebanon War) and three future campaigns (Syrian Front, Iraqi Front, and Lebanese Front), each with seven missions. The historical campaigns will be wide-open, allowing you to play the missions in any order, but the future campaigns will be linear, to create a sense of an unfolding story. In addition to the campaigns, there will be a mission builder, in which you set the parameters used to randomly generate a mission.

You don't play missions as a single pilot. Rather, you'll be able to jump from plane to plane, using an in-flight map that tracks the progress of all friendly flights. The map will only show what your assets have detected and identified. Line-of-sight restrictions on radar will allow aircraft to use terrain masking and pop-up attacks. Nighttime missions, as well as a progressing time of day, will vary visibility, severely limiting detection ranges for planes without radar.

Missions will have up to four wings, each comprised of two or three aircraft. Each wing will be tasked with a different mission, such as CAP, SEAD, or ground strikes. In the pre-flight briefing, you'll be able to tweak waypoints, loadouts, and missions, but once everyone's airborne, the AI will be in charge of all the wings but the one you've chosen at any given moment. So if you're loath to miss out on any combat, you can jump from wing to wing, taking control of lead aircraft as the action heats up. In each mission, one of the wings will be assigned the objective. Once that's met, you can safely end the mission without having to fly back to base.

Each of *Israeli Air Combat*'s seven (nine, if you include the two Russian aircraft available for multiplayer games) aircraft cockpits has a distinct design, but they seem primarily based on MFDs, similar to the *ATF* series. Lively radio chatter between aircraft will keep you updated on everyone's progress. The 3D accelerated aircraft graphics are sharp and distinct, but Pixel has devised a unique solution to ensure smooth framerates: the objects support 3D acceleration through Direct3D, but the environments are rendered in software only. "The aircraft are being done on a hardware board and the terrain is being done by the CPU," explains Grace, "They've separated the process into two pieces. Hopefully this will give us very high detail models without consuming too much



Israeli Air Combat

Tour's "Player of the Year" for 1997, Mr. Tiger Woods. This game sports 3D accelerated graphics, the official PGA Tour license and nine touring pros. EA is also touting easy Internet play, so expect many online tournaments to take place.
PICTURE» Endorsement heaven
RELEASE DATE» Summer 1998

ELECTRONIC ARTS ENTERTAINMENT

MOTO RACER 2

GENRE» Racing
PITCH» The sequel to the popular racing game adds 40, count 'em, 40 tracks, a track editor (yeehaw!) and enhanced multiplayer for up to eight racers. There are five new exotic locations, and the controls have been improved.
PICTURE» Motocross without quite as much madness
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

NEED FOR SPEED III: HOT PURSUIT

GENRE» Racing
PITCH» Now you can be a cop trying to catch those pesky speeders in their Ferrari's and Lamborghinis. If you choose to be the one being chased, you'll have to avoid a more advanced level of police pursuit, including tire spikes and roadblocks. To extend the life of the game, you'll be able to download new cars from EA's web site.
PICTURE» *Need for 3D Acceleration*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

PRAX WAR

GENRE» 3D Action
PITCH» With an all-new engine touting greater complexity than *Quake*, *Prey* or *Unreal*, developer Rebel Boat Rocker is certainly promising a lot. While the futuristic setting won't necessarily set the world on fire, the fact that everything but the game engine is written in Java might—it will allow you to basically write your own game logic and AI using that popular language.
PICTURE» The other 3D shooters touting advanced AI and a plot
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

FIRAXIS

SID MEIER'S ALPHA CENTAURI

GENRE» Turn-based Strategy
PITCH» Picking up where *Civilization* left off, a group of colonists leave Earth hoping to find a new home in the Alpha Centauri star system. Unfortunately, the colonists split into seven groups, and it's up to you to lead your faction in the race to determine the direction civilization will

Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri

Prax War

Ultima: Ascension

SimCity 3000

Apache Havoc

take on this new world.
PICTURE» Brian Reynolds + Sid Meier = The real *Civilization III*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

JANE'S COMBAT SIMULATIONS

FLEET COMMANDER

GENRE» Wargame
PICTURE» Command a fleet from one of 16 different nations in either a 2D or 3D mode. The campaigns will take place in the Bay of Bengal, the Straits of Malacca, the Taiwan Strait, and the Kuril Islands, and the game flow can be altered by outside events, such as the Russian economic situation. The game will include a mission editor and support up to eight players through the usual multiplayer connections.
PICTURE» *Harpoon & Conquer*
RELEASE DATE» Spring 1999

MAXIS

SIMCITY 3000

GENRE» Strategy
PITCH» After ditching a 3D engine and simplifying some of the design, the game missed its 1997 release. You still zone areas for construction, but a new zone density—medium—allows things like brownstones to pop-up on the landscape. Visually, the game is beautiful to look at, with the same isometric view as before, with a rotatable map and multiple zoom levels.
PICTURE» There's only one *SimCity*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

ORIGIN SYSTEMS

ULTIMA ASCENSION

GENRE» Role-playing
PITCH» The latest version of the legendary series returns in full third-person 3D. This will be the final chapter of the Avatar-Guardian conflict and will answer all your questions about their relationship. Previewed in issue 93.
PICTURE» Lots of controversy when it finally ships
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

ULTIMA ONLINE GOLD

GENRE» Online Role-playing
PITCH» This is the working title of the next major release of this game. It'll have new places to explore, a larger playable landmass to encourage player-made cities, new terrain and creatures, a new IRC-style chat system, player bios and a printed manual.
PICTURE» *Ultima Online* more often
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

EMPIRE INTERACTIVE

101ST AIRBORNE IN NORMANDY

GENRE» War/Strategy
PITCH» Command men of the elite paratroop unit in various turn-based missions set during D-Day. Maps in the game are based on actual Norman terrain, and you'll encounter realistic obstacles: scattered troops, missed landing zones, and unexpected enemies.
PICTURE» *Computer Ambush* or *Soldiers at War*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

APACHE HAVOC

GENRE» Flight Simulation
PITCH» Get two opposing helicopter sims in one. The focus is on realistic helicopter environments and tactics and on strong multiplayer support. Previewed in issue 93.
PICTURE» *Comanche Hokum*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

COMANCHE HOKUM

GENRE» Flight Simulation
PITCH» This set of reconnaissance-light attack helicopters is intended to complement the heavies of *Apache Havoc*; all four

LIONHEAD

BLACK & WHITE

GENRE» Strategy
PITCH» Bullfrog founder Peter Molyneux returns with a game that sounds both familiar and innovative. Shown only behind closed doors, Molyneux showed an early build of the game that featured mesh instead of real terrain, populated with a few actual character graphics and a rudimentary character AI.

The premise of the game is certainly interesting. A utopian world is disrupted by an outside force—you—and based on the way you play the game, the world may be better or worse off. You start the game in a corner of the island world filled with various villages and AI-imbued inhabitants. In typical Molyneux fashion, you need to figure out a way to get the villages to worship you, and how you go about this affects how the gameworld looks and feels. You can attack or defend villages or unleash your worldly manifestation, which you can train to be a destroyer or benefactor.

One area of innovation is in the game's interface—there isn't any, at least in the traditional sense. All actions in the game are done via the manipulation of objects and buildings in the gameworld, and a spell system depends on mouse movement (move it in a zig-zag pattern in order to, say, cast lightning).

Astute fans of past Bullfrog games can certainly recognize elements of Molyneux's previous efforts in this design. However, readers familiar with the years of feverish anticipation that preceded the launch of *Dungeon Keeper* would be well-advised to keep in mind that the team still has a lot to finalize on the design for *Black & White*. When asked about a release date, Molyneux laughed and, alluding to the slipped release dates of *Dungeon Keeper* said, "we're not going to go through that again."
PICTURE» *Populous Keeper*
RELEASE DATE» 1999

Black & White

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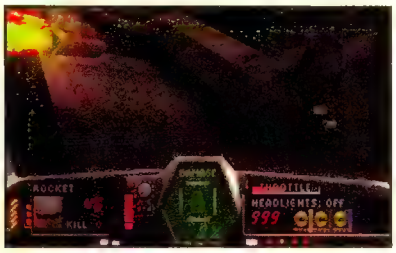

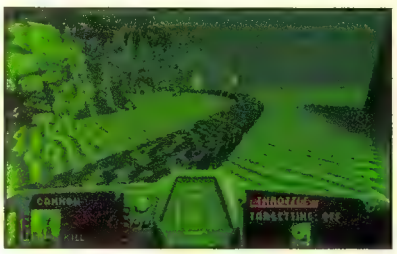

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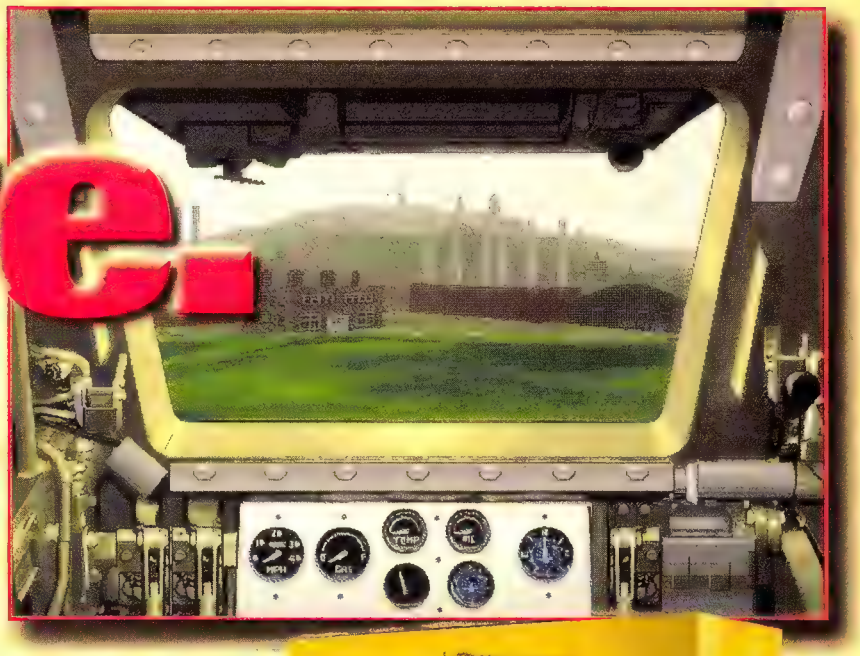

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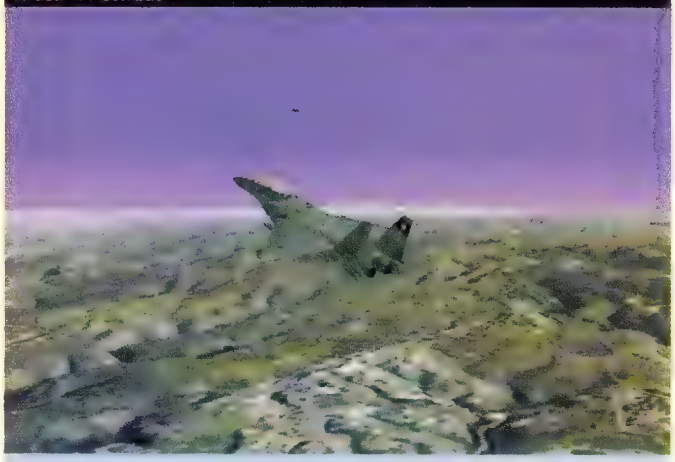
JANE'S

bandwidth. Also, if you don't have a hardware board, it will still look good." The result is a somewhat fuzzy and pixilated landscape, but it allows the engine to incorporate precise satellite topography with a consistent level of detail at all altitudes.

The seven flyable aircraft are all distinctly Israeli. "For instance, the F-15 is modified extensively," explains Grace, "They've replaced all the avionics and weapons systems. Although the airframes are the same, all the aircraft are modified from their American counterparts." Included munitions are the standard spread of air-to-air missiles, TV-guided missiles, radar-guided weapons, and dumb bombs, with delivery modes including CCIP, video MFDs, and FLIR pods.

Also distinctly Israeli is the Python-4, an air-to-air missile described by Grace as "far more lethal than any US weapon." The Python uses a helmet-mounted head-up-display that allows the pilot to target enemies even at a 90 degree angle from his plane's

Israeli Air Combat



nose. Unfortunately, this capability won't be modeled in *Israeli Air Combat*. "It's still a classified system," mumbles Grace. It's also possible the title will ship without a padlock system. "One of the developers designed a sort of padlock mode, but right now no one's able to use it except him, so it probably won't be making it into the final product."

PICTURE» Israel rising
RELEASE DATE» August 1998

WWII FIGHTERS

GENRE» Flight Simulation
PITCH» *WWII Fighters* will mark Jane's Combat Simulations' first visit to the past. This title is easily one of the most attractive of the half-dozen upcoming WWII sims, but Grace hopes to let gamers have their cakes and eat them, too. When asked if it will appeal to *Warbirds* fanatics with their obsessions for accurate flight models, Grace doesn't miss a beat. "Absolutely. Our air models are going to be as accurate, or more so, in the wicked mode. But we'll also have modes for players who aren't interested in all that. But, yes, I think *Warbirds* players will really like this."

WWII Fighters begins in a hi-res museum that lets you closely examine the game's seven flyable aircraft while a virtual tour guide offers some narration. Producer Steve Matulac demonstrates how you can peer into the crisply rendered cockpit of a Focke-Wulf, getting a sense for how cramped it is. "We actually used some of these models for the cockpits in the game," he says, "although we turned the resolution down a bit." Also included will be interviews with air combat vets: "We wanted to have an ace speak about each of the different aircraft."

WWII Fighters takes place during a week and a half of the last German offensive, the Battle of the Bulge. Although the Germans were actually beaten back, the player's success or failure will determine the outcome of the battle this time around. Scripted missions are arranged along a branching campaign. Also included will be a mission generator similar to the one in *Israeli Air Combat*, and some can be linked once this game comes out.
PICTURE» *Apache Havoc*
RELEASE DATE» 1999

MIG ALLEY

GENRE» Simulation
PITCH» Classic planes (including early top-of-the-line jet fighters) duel over the Korean Peninsula in a much neglected sub-genre of flight sims. The flight models are getting plenty of attention, and the campaign system is involved. Previewed in issue 93.
PICTURE» A smarter *Sabre Ace*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

PRO-PINBALL: BIG RACE USA

GENRE» Traditional
PITCH» A super realistic pinball simulation whose theme is a race across the U.S., *Big Race* features even more realism than its predecessors, including more axes of spin on the balls and the ability to have balls go airborne.
PICTURE» *Pro-Pinball: Timeshock*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

WAR ALONG THE MOHAWK

GENRE» Strategy/Role-playing
PITCH» Lead British, French, and Native characters, NPCs, and units through a series of scenarios set in the days of the French and Indian War. Not all combat, the game will also require that you earn money and deal with the politics and personalities surrounding you.
PICTURE» *Mohicans & Conquer*
RELEASE DATE» Summer 1998

WARGAMER: NAPOLEON 1813

GENRE» Wargame
PITCH» Command the forces of France or its enemies during the campaigns of 1813-1814 in this operational/tactical continuous-time game. Previewed in issue 93.
PICTURE» *Sid Meier's Gettysburg* goes to France
RELEASE DATE» 1999

ESPN DIGITAL GAMES

NATIONAL HOCKEY NIGHT

GENRE» Sports
PITCH» As you watch a pre-game show by Dan Patrick and Kenny Mayne and listen to the color commentary of Gary Thorne and Steve Levy, keep in mind this game is "the game formerly known as *NHL PowerPlay*."
PICTURE» Watch out *NHL 98*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

NBA TONIGHT

GENRE» Sports
PITCH» Combine ESPN glitz with polygonal action and you have a legitimate *NBA Live* competitor. Buzzword alert: features "Read and React AI," meaning... something.
PICTURE» "Baskeball jones, I got a basketball jones"
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

X GAMES PRO BOARDER

GENRE» Extreme Sports
PITCH» Snowboarding comes to your PC. Catch some serious air as Tina Basich, Peter Line, Todd Richards, Shannon Dunn, Daniel Franck, Morgan Lafonte or Jamie Lynn. Sound track features the soothing sounds of Foo Fighters, Lunatic Calm, NOFX and Rancid.
PICTURE» Regular sports games, only more annoying
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

FOX INTERACTIVE

ALIEN RESURRECTION

GENRE» Action/Adventure
PITCH» This title offers buckets of firepower, disgusting aliens and a dose of apocalyptic mayhem.
PICTURE» Ripley's Believe it or Not
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

ALIENS VS. PREDATOR

GENRE» 3D Action
PITCH» Research station Pandora is the site of this corridor crawl through a biological warfare lab infested with some pretty gruesome specimens.
PICTURE» Sigourney vs. Arnie
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

FOX SPORTS COLLEGE HOOPS '99

GENRE» Sports
PITCH» With a complete college basketball license, NCAA, all major conferences and 112 major college teams, this is a comprehensive look at championship college play.
PICTURE» Dunking, swatting, stealing. And that's just the off the court stuff
RELEASE DATE» November 1998

FOX SPORTS HOCKEY '99

GENRE» Sports
PITCH» This title features multi-camera-angled hockey action in full 3D with an NHLPA license.
PICTURE» Ice, ice baby
RELEASE DATE» September 1998

MOTORHEAD

GENRE» Action
PITCH» Fast-action road racing game with graphics promising 50 frames-per-second.
PICTURE» *Need for 3D Accelerator*
RELEASE DATE» October 1998

TEAM LOSI RC RACING

GENRE» Action
PITCH» Take control of one of 16

GATHERING OF DEVELOPERS

MAX PAYNE

GENRE» 3D Action
PITCH» Shown only behind closed doors (a looped video was playing on the show floor), Remedy Entertainment is justifiably proud of their new action game. Obviously under the influence of way too many John Woo films, the Finnish developer has created Max, one of those "hard-boiled, fugitive undercover cops" (are there any other kind?) who, shortly after having his entire family murdered, finds himself framed for the murder of his boss. His journey takes him through the streets and bowels of New York City—the environments shown look quite complex and diverse, with lots of neon grunge (which is probably an oxymoron, but nonetheless appropriate). In keeping with the melodramatic elements of the story, it all unfolds in graphic-novel (read: comic book) styled cut scenes.

What makes the game standout is how Remedy is applying whiz-bang technology to add interesting details. An advanced particle system produces impressive smoke effects when you fire any of the real-world weapons. They can also use this feature gameplay-wise, as you track a character that is, say, smoking a cigarette. As with any third-person game, character animation is important. Max already moves realistically, especially when firing one of his real-world weapons or performing those Woo-esque moves: firing while ducking, rolling or diving.

The game plans on shipping with the MaxEd level and ParticleFX particle editor. As befitting a game scheduled for release in 1999, the recommended machine is seriously next-generation: 300MHz Pentium II, 64MB of RAM and a Voodoo2 card.
PICTURE» The next *Duke Nukem*?
RELEASE DATE» 1999

radio controlled vehicles, each with its own distinctive paint-job and unique personality, and race it around any of 15 obstacle-littered custom tracks.
PICTURE» *Beach Carmageddon*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

GATHERING OF DEVELOPERS

POPTOP SOFTWARE

RAILROAD TYCOON II

GENRE» Strategy
PITCH» You're a wheeler-dealer in the big business world of railroads. Place track, bring industries to various towns, play the stocks, and generally make tons of cash. Previewed in issue 92.
PICTURE» The game every strategy fan has wanted for years
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

RITUAL ENTERTAINMENT

HEAVY METAL: F.A.K.K.2

GENRE» 3D Action
PITCH» The creators of the upcoming *Sin* have received the license to the upcoming sequel to the cult classic animated movie *Heavy Metal*. The game, *Heavy Metal: F.A.K.K.2* (Federation Assigned Ketogenic Killzone) will have access to the film's artwork and soundtrack. While previous Ritual titles were powered by the *Quake* 3D engine, *Heavy Metal* will feature original technology.
PICTURE» Huh huh, naked chicks
RELEASE DATE» 1999

TERMINAL REALITY

FLY!

GENRE» Civilian Flight Simulation
PITCH» Taking on *Microsoft Flight Simulator* isn't for the timid, but developer Terminal Reality is confident they can compete. The game features a global flight area, realistic cockpits and avionics (of course), an interactive air-traffic control system with full voice, global positioning system (GPS) navigation and realistic air traffic. Multiplayer plans include the built-in ability for groups of players to fly together over the Internet.
PICTURE» *Flight Simulator* via GOD
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

NOCTURNE

GENRE» 3D Action/Adventure
PICTURE» You're Josh Rogan, a sort of 19th century *X-Files*-style supernatural investigator, who'll need to fight off ghosts, vampires, zombies and werewolves around

JANE'S single player missions from other parts of the war (an included V1 rocket among the game's aircraft hints at some Battle of Britain scenarios). As for the multiplayer element, Grace says, "Think of what we had for *Fighters Anthology*, plus drop-in/drop-out support, and cooperative missions." Both *Israeli Air Combat* and *WWII Fighters* will enjoy seamless integration with Jane's Combat.net.

The view from within *WWII Fighters* is nothing short of stunning. Although the terrain is rendered with a serviceable tiling system, it's the airborne stuff that really hits you in the eyes. The finely detailed aircraft are all good and well. The virtual 3D cockpits with all their knobs and switches are a nice treat, along with the subtle reflection effect of looking through a glass canopy. The external views have little touches like seeing the pilot's head swivel around inside the cockpit and watching shell casings stream from the wing when guns are fired. Location specific damage textures are reminiscent of the excellent work done in Grace's earlier titles, but this time, they're more than eye candy: when you get hit in the wing, you'll see bullet holes on that wing or the tip will get shot off, affecting your flight model accordingly.

But one of the most spectacular innovations *WWII Fighters* will bring to the table is cloud effects. No longer is cloud cover simply a soft sheet spread across a pre-set altitude or a fat white block of polygons; these clouds are exquisitely rendered with 3D accelerated smoke-like effects, clumped into fluffy patches which are perfect for a bit of cat and mouse. A similar effect is used for flak, which blossoms like beautiful black flowers from nowhere. Both effects take their toll on framerate, even without other planes in the sky. But Grace is confident they'll be able to optimize the code and get 20 to 30 planes in the air at any given time. Of course, configurable graphics options will allow users to make their own choices between eye candy and speed, but this is definitely a game being written to wring the most from high-end machines.

PICTURE» The other 233 WWII sims

RELEASE DATE» September 1998

the country. The game is powered by TRI's Nocturne engine, which features 32-bit color, real-time volumetric lighting and fogging.

PICTURE» *Nightmare Tomb Creature Raider*

RELEASE DATE» 1999

GT INTERACTIVE

BLOOD 2: THE CHOSEN

GENRE» 3D Action

PITCH» Using their own LithTech engine, Monolith's *Blood 2* is *Blood's* bigger, meaner, darker brother. *Blood 2* will move beyond the single character motif common to most first person shooters, allowing you to play as other "Chosen Ones," each with unique abilities and powers. The look of *Blood 2* will be heavily inspired by '20s to '40s architecture.

PICTURE» *Blood* meets *The Crow*

RELEASE DATE» October 1998

DUKE NUKEM FOREVER

GENRE» 3D Action

PITCH» Shown only behind closed doors, the Duke-ster looked mighty impressive, but it wasn't the game that's going to appear on store shelves. In a surprise move, 3D Realms announced post-show that it's dropping the *Quake II* technology previously powering the game and replacing it with *Unreal*'s well-reviewed engine. But back to the game. The action is centered on Las Vegas, so expect more strippers, more swearing, more Duke-isms. The environments shown look impressive, with a particularly cool mine car sequence "borrowed" from *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*.

PICTURE» *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas 3D*

RELEASE DATE» Spring 1999

LODE RUNNER 2

GENRE» Action/Puzzle

PITCH» Developed in conjunction with the original game's creator, the view is pseudo-3D isometric, there are still an absurdly high number of levels (75), and you're still scamming gold while being attacked by mad monks.

PICTURE» Anyone else remember *Lode Runner Returns?*

RELEASE DATE» Summer 1998

MISSING IN ACTION

GENRE» Action/Simulation

PITCH» Go back to Vietnam, fly behind enemy lines and rescue POWs with 26 missions based on actual helicopter operations of the war. The game will have an FMV storyline and the 3D engine will deliver the goods that gamers have come to expect: translucency, fog, flare, dynamic lighting, and animated skylines.

PICTURE» I'm too sexy for a sim

RELEASE DATE» Summer 1998

ODDWORLD: ABE'S EXODDUS

GENRE» Action

PITCH» Run, jump and make rude noises as Abe in this sequel. *Exoddus* takes place immediately after the first game, and Abe must stop the Glukkons, who are grinding up the bones of deceased Mudokons and turning the powder into the latest soft drink.

PICTURE» A revolutionary game—it's actually 2D

RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

POWERSLIDE

GENRE» Racing

PITCH» Drive SUVs in this future race game powered by an engine that includes dynamic weather effects and support for 3D accelerators.

PICTURE» Yuppie's in the rain

RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

PREY

GENRE» 3D Action

PITCH» Shown only behind closed doors, 3D Realms showed the game that will serve as the debut vehicle for the technology that will power their next-generation of 3D games. With plans for advanced AI, a new "Portal" technology that doesn't pre-process the geometry of the environments (we don't understand it either, but it looks nice), multiple-pass radiosity lighting, a soundtrack by KMFDM, in-game characters that show all weapons and move their heads as they look around, it passes the all-important buzzword test. How will it play? We shall see… looks mighty impressive, though.

PICTURE» *Quake III* or *Unreal II*

RELEASE DATE» 1999

REBEL MOON REVOLUTION

GENRE» 3D Action

PITCH» This shooter emphasizes team play, and supports voice recognition for issuing team members commands. It also has 3D acceleration support for its non-Euclidean 3D engine (er, you betcha).

PICTURE» Friends and relatives wondering why you're talking to your computer

RELEASE DATE» October 1998

TIDES OF WAR

GENRE» Real-Time Strategy/Role-playing

PITCH» Over the course of 60 missions, players will command various ships and engage the enemy in combat as you try and make enough cash to take over Sea

World (or something like that).
PICTURE» Those old Koei games
RELEASE DATE» Summer 1998

TRANS-AM RACING

GENRE» Racing
PITCH» Race on real tracks in real cars with real physics and serious damage modeling. The cars include the '68 Chevrolet Camaro, the '70 Pontiac Firebird, the '66 Dodge Dart, and the '70 Boss Mustang FB.
PICTURE» NASCAR with bouncy suspensions
RELEASE DATE» October 1998

WAR OF THE WORLDS

GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PITCH» Desperate to escape a dying homeworld, Martians set their sights on nice, cushy Earth. D-Day is set to August 10, 1898, Earth-calendar and the British Empire is at the center of the reticle. There are no fixed missions—they are generated on the fly much like *X-COM*.
PICTURE» *X-COM & Conquer*
RELEASE DATE» Summer 1998

WHEEL OF TIME

GENRE» 3D Action/Role-playing/Strategy
PITCH» An ambitious design from Legend Entertainment, the single-player game is more of a standard Adventure/RPG where you have to find some objects to save the world (it's more complex than this, but you get the general gist of things). In multiplayer, you'll be able to design the layout of your own dungeon (Legend isn't sure if they'll include an actual level editor), and friends and enemies can try to invade.
PICTURE» What *Dungeon Keeper* tried to be
RELEASE DATE» 1999

YOUNGBLOOD

GENRE» Action
PITCH» Based on the comic book by Rob Liefeld, you need to find the traitor inside the Youngblood organization. The game will have 11 real-time missions with multiple levels and arenas—in single-player, the good guys will operate in teams of two to four. Guess how multiplayer operates? Can you say "co-op?"
PICTURE» *Diablo* in the comics
RELEASE DATE» Summer 1998

HASBRO

AXIS & ALLIES

GENRE» Strategy
PITCH» Faithful to the rules of the best-selling board game, this title challenges you to spearhead your country's military effort during WWII.
PICTURE» The board game in stage makeup
RELEASE DATE» September 1998

CENTIPEDE

GENRE» Action
PITCH» Battle deadly monster insects and plenty of centipedes in this tribute to the classic Atari game. As Wally, you operate the almighty combat vessel The Shooter, and squish 'em into the dirt.
PICTURE» The Eighties in 3D
RELEASE DATE» October 1998

GLOVER

GENRE» 3D Action
PITCH» A pair of gloves is separated by a magical explosion and the good glove must battle the evil glove's power to return crystals dislodged in the blast to their rightful place.
PICTURE» Lara in Isotoners
RELEASE DATE» November 1998

H.E.D.Z.

GENRE» Action
PITCH» Enter the Head Extreme Destruction Zone, where an alien race (that visits Earth on a regular basis) has collected a myriad of human heads as trophies that for use as weapons in their sports/battle pastime.
PICTURE» Ichabod Crane
RELEASE DATE» September 1998

STRATEGO

GENRE» Strategy
PITCH» The classic Napoleonic board game comes to life as players have a go at single or multiplayer *Capture the Flag*.
PICTURE» Little Drummer Boy at Waterloo
RELEASE DATE» October 1998

IMPACT INTERACTIVE

WARTORN

GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PITCH» Control forces in "kill-or-be-killed war tournaments." Modify units, mixing and matching parts as needed.
PICTURE» *Command & Conquer* and *Extreme Tactics* go 3D
RELEASE DATE» Summer 1998

ION STORM

ANACHRONOX

GENRE» Role-playing
PITCH» This *Final Fantasy*-style RPG uses the *Quake II* engine in a third-person, single player game with real-time combat. Control up to three characters at a time, from an eventual cast of seven, explore the galaxy and three different dimensions. Over 100 levels and 150 monsters lie in wait before you can unravel the mystery.
PICTURE» *Final Quake Fantasy VII*
RELEASE DATE» 1999

DAIKATANA

GENRE» 3D Action
PITCH» From former id Software designer John Romero comes his own *Quake II*-based game. In the future, the evil Dr. Jarred Benedict finds the sword Daikatana, travels back in time, and makes himself wealthy and powerful. The lead character Hiro recovers Daikatana in the first of the game's four episodes and then chases Dr. Benedict through time.
PICTURE» The other 3D shooters touting advanced AI and a plot
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

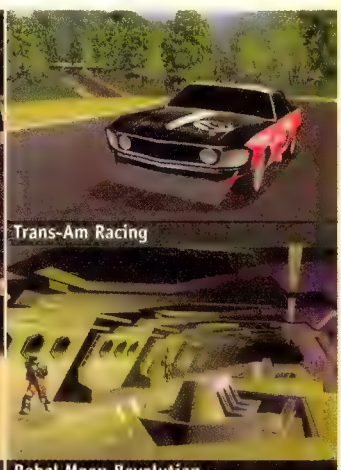
INFOGRAMES

DID

F-22 TOTAL AIR WAR

GENRE» Wargame/Simulation
PITCH» Command the entire air war in a hypothetical Middle Eastern conflict and, if you like, drop into an F-22 to fly the missions

Duke Nukem Forever


Trans-Am Racing

Rebel Moon Revolution

Youngblood

Lode Runner 2

Axis & Allies

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COMING FALL 1998

Westwood STUDIOS

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PICTURE» *F-22 ADF* crashes into *Harpoon II*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

WARGASM
GENRE» Action/Simulation
PITCH» The world's done away with real war and instead has virtual war care of the world-wide war web (wwww). Command tanks, choppers, or even individual troops as you create action-oriented mayhem in DID's new "3-Dream" technology-based world.
PICTURE» Hardcore developer lets its hair down... waaaay down
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

I-MOTION

HEXPLORE
GENRE» Action/Role-playing
PITCH» Gather a group of adventurers to rid the world of yet another icky bad guy. Swordplay and magic are your tools for 200 levels of fantasy fun. Previewed in issue 91.
PICTURE» *Diablo* meets *Gauntlet*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

OUTCAST
GENRE» Action/Adventure
PITCH» You're sucked into an alternate universe where you are the outsider. Figure out what the hell is going on and try to stay alive while tracking down the ultimate bad guy.
PICTURE» Action with *Journeyman Project*-like depth
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

PARTICLE SYSTEMS

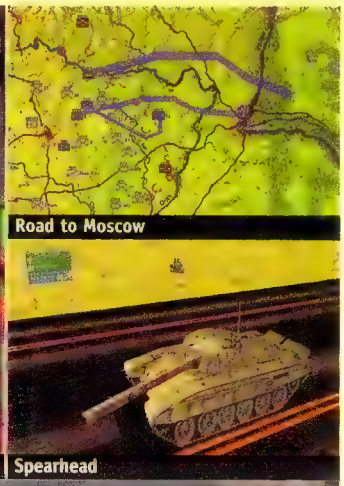
INDEPENDENCE WAR
GENRE» Space Simulation
PITCH» Space combat with realistic physics, lots of technical details, and a solid storyline. Previewed in issue 93.
PICTURE» *Wing Commander* with a bit more brains
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

SPGS

FIGHTER DUEL 2.0
GENRE» Flight Simulation
PITCH» Oodles of WWII aircraft, realistic physics, and hot dogfighting action.
PICTURE» Air to air combat stripped to its essentials
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

INTERACTIVE MAGIC

IF/A-18 CARRIER STRIKE FIGHTER
GENRE» Flight Simulation
PITCH» The Navy gets its day in this single-product flight sim. Previewed in issue 90.
PICTURE» *iF-22* on a carrier



RELEASE DATE» Summer 1998

DAWN OF ACES
GENRE» Online Flight Simulation
PITCH» WW I gets its first dedicated online-only flight sim since *Red Baron Online*.
PICTURE» *Warbirds* with canvas wings and crazy pilots
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

MALKARI
GENRE» Turn-based Strategy
PITCH» You're out to exploit a belt of asteroids and beat your other belters in the process.
PICTURE» The turn-based frontier
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

ROAD TO MOSCOW
GENRE» Wargame
PITCH» Command the operational-scale forces of either the Axis or the Soviets on the Eastern Front during WW II. Previewed in issue 90.
PICTURE» *Patriot* without the flaws?
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

SPEARHEAD
GENRE» Tank Simulation
PITCH» Fight across the sands of Tunisia (and through a series of linked missions) in your M1 tank; I-Magic promotes the game's flashy exterior while extolling the virtues of its supposedly detailed guts. Previewed in issue 87.
PICTURE» *Armored iM1-A2 Fist 2*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

THEOCRACY
GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PITCH» Build your Aztec nation while fighting against other Aztec powers and the invading Spanish in a mix of history, fantasy, RTS combat, and city development.
PICTURE» *Age of Aztecs*
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

ULTRAFIGHTERS
GENRE» Action/Simulation
PITCH» Futuristic ultralights battle over the Solomon Islands sometime in the 26th century.
PICTURE» The future is light
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

VANGERS
GENRE» Racing/Action/Adventure/Puzzle/Strategy/Exploration
PITCH» Explore/race/trade through an ever-changing landscape viewed from overhead.
PICTURE» A race game on funny mushrooms
RELEASE DATE» Summer 1998

INTERPLAY

BLACK ISLE STUDIOS

BALDUR'S GATE
GENRE» Role-playing
PITCH» *AD&D*. The Forgotten Realms. Multi-character party. Real-time. I.e, the first real chance for a good AD&D RPG since the Gold Box era. Previewed in issue 87.
PICTURE» *Diablo* with real RPG elements and the *AD&D* license
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

FALLOUT 2
GENRE» Role-playing
PITCH» You're the descendent of the hero from the original game. You've got to find the legendary Vault 13 and retrieve the Garden of Eden Creation Kit. Oh, and kill things along the way, of course. Previewed in issue 90.
PICTURE» *Fallout*, but more of it
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

PLANESCAPE
GENRE» Role-playing
PITCH» Supposedly the *AD&D* title to follow Baldur's Gate. Expect weird things from the many planes of the multiverse.
PICTURE» *Planescape's Gate*
RELEASE DATE» 1999

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STONEKEEP II
GENRE» Role-playing
PITCH» A 3D sequel to the original, sort-of 3D game. And no, it doesn't use the *Descent to Undermountain* engine. Honest.
PICTURE» A 3D RPG with, in theory at least, the depth of *Stonekeep* and none of its problems
RELEASE DATE» 1999

FLAT CAT

ALIEN INTELLIGENCE
GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PITCH» This game features action on the tactical, solar system, and galactic level. All at the same time. Against several opponents. Right.
PICTURE» *Command & Conquer*, *Star Control 2*, and *MOO* all rolled into one and given crank
RELEASE DATE» August 1998

STAR TREK: STARFLEET COMMAND
GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PITCH» *Star Trek* real-time strategy with you in charge of up to three capital ships. Wage war across the galaxy in between commercial breaks.
PICTURE» *MechCommander* with space ships instead of giant robots
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

TANTRUM

CARMAGEDDON II
GENRE» Vehicular Mayhem
PITCH» Rampage the countryside (again) in the sequel to one of the most impressive displays of arcade physics ever created. All in-game graphics are now polygonal and a new scoring system is being implemented.
PICTURE» *Carmageddon*, with more violence (ick)
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

DESCENT III
GENRE» 3D Action
PITCH» Sequel to the first two Descent titles, this one takes you out of the caves for a spin around the local asteroid belt. Previewed in issue 92.
PICTURE» *Descent* with more than just caves to zoom about in
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

EARTHWORM JIM 3D
GENRE» 3D Action
PITCH» Squiggle around a worm's world in glorious and slimy 3D. Previewed in issue 92.
PICTURE» Mario if he was a worm
RELEASE DATE» August 1998

GIANTS
GENRE» Action
PITCH» Kick butt in a gorgeous if really weird 3D world, full of tornados, cow-like critters, and naked women. Previewed in issue 93.
PICTURE» *MDK* crossed with *Unreal* and a dose of *The Horde*—on some really strong drugs
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

HEART OF DARKNESS
GENRE» Action
PITCH» Eternally delayed game finally sees the light of day. Help a little boy find his Whiskey—his dog Whiskey, not Jack Daniels. A 2D side-scroller with lots of cinematics.
PICTURE» *Prince of Persia* meets *Alone in the Dark*
RELEASE DATE» Summer 1998

MESSIAH
GENRE» 3D Action/Adventure
PITCH» You are Bob, an angel sent to save the world by finding seven seals and destroying the first foot-soldier of Hell. The game uses a special technique called tessellating that, on-the-fly, changes the polygon count of objects. This gives consistent frame rates on high- or low-end machines, with an improvement in visual quality for the big boys with the big toys.
PICTURE» The other 3D shooters touting advanced AI and a plot
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

STAR TREK: KLINGON ACADEMY
GENRE» Space Simulation
PITCH» Knock Federation heads together, whup up on Romulans, and generally raise hell as a big dude with a knobby head and a big spaceship.
PICTURE» *Starfleet Academy*, except with Worf in charge
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

TRIBAL DREAMS

STAR TREK: SECRET OF VULCAN FURY
GENRE» Adventure
PITCH» Eternally delayed *Star Trek* adventure focusing on the ancient antagonism between Vulcans and Romulans. Extensive attention to detail and fidelity to the *Star Trek* license.
PICTURE» A high-gloss adventure
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1999

LOOKING GLASS STUDIOS

FLIGHT UNLIMITED III
GENRE» Civilian Flight Simulation
PITCH» Fly the friendly skies (again) with the latest version of this venerable series. Now published by Electronic Arts.
PICTURE» Hmm, *Flight Unlimited*?
RELEASE DATE» 1999

SYSTEM SHOCK 2
GENRE» 3D Action/Adventure
PITCH» The best-ever single-player 3D game finally gets a sequel. Based on the technology developed for *Thief: The Dark Project*,
PICTURE» A modern *System Shock*
RELEASE DATE» 1999

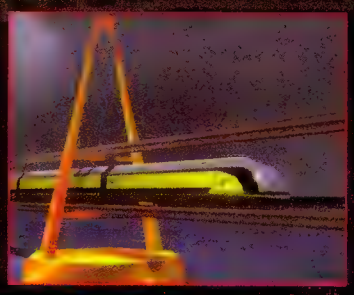
THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT
GENRE» 3D Action/Adventure
PITCH» There's more to first-person 3D than blowing up countless enemies with little regard for your own life. Rather than running in, guns ablaze, here you'll have to sneak around various levels and kill things. Previewed in issue 92.
PICTURE» A subtle 3D shooter (is that an oxymoron?)
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

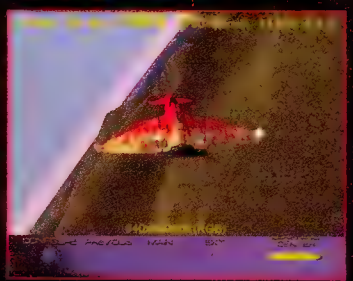
LUCASARTS

GRIM FANDANGO
GENRE» Adventure
PITCH» Tim Schafer (*Day of the*

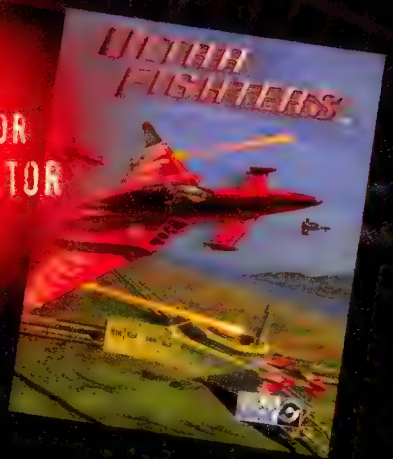
Where Technology Meets Technique

THE FUTURE OF DOGFIGHTING





OPTIMIZED FOR 3D ACCELERATOR CARDS



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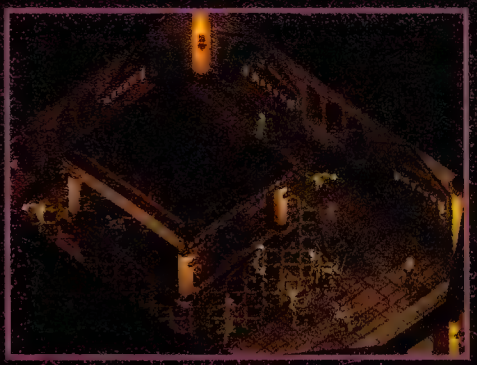

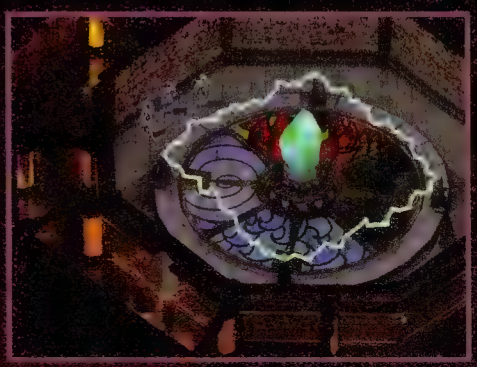

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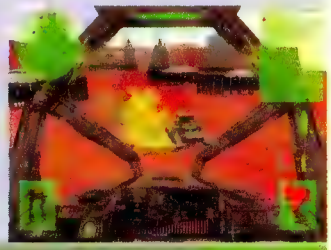
MICROPROSE

MECHWARRIOR 3

GENRE» Big-robot Action
PITCH» This is not last year's *MechWarrior 3*, the one based on the arcade version of the game; that project, developed by FASA Interactive, is proving to take longer than expected (and may now become *MechWarrior 4*). Instead, MicroProse has turned to Zipper Interactive to produce the next game in the most-highly-regarded-but-oft-troubled sci-fi sim series; they have said they came to this decision "based largely on the power and potential of Zipper's 3D engine."

The game is set in the year 3058 of the *BattleTech* universe, just as the Houses of the Inner Sphere are kicking off their counter-attack against Clan forces; their goal is to defeat the Smoke Jaguar Clan. Missions will be mixed, with some involving friendly 'Mechs you can call upon and direct, while others have you fighting across the battlefield solo. You can work through a number of training missions to help you familiarize yourself with the complexities of 'Mech combat, or you can try out fixed single scenarios on three of the four planets the game portrays. Once you're ready you can dive into the linear campaign, which consists of 20 missions spread across four areas/planets. If you tire of fighting the computer you can take on up to seven other players in 'Mech furballs or team games via LAN or modem (no word yet on Internet play).
PICTURE» *MechWarrior 2* looking *fabulous*
RELEASE DATE» 1999



Tentacle) brings us a dramatic and mythical story of crime and corruption set in a world inspired by both film noir and Mexican Folklore and set in and around the *Dia De Los Muertos* ("Day of the Dead") festival. We'll have a more detailed look at the game next month.
PICTURE» Skeletons in tuxedos
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

INDIANA JONES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE

GENRE» 3D Action/Adventure
PITCH» Grab your whip and fedora and join Dr. Henry "Indiana" Jones in a globe-spanning race in search of the mysterious Infernal Machine. Whip, crawl, run, leap, swim and climb your way through puzzles in 3D.
PICTURE» *Tomb Raider* with a wip
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

STAR WARS: FORCE COMMANDER

GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PITCH» Play the resourceful Rebel Alliance or powerful Galactic Empire in full-scale ground-based combat over a vast array of engagement theaters throughout the *Star Wars* universe, all fully rendered in 3D.
PICTURE» *Rebellion & Conquer*
RELEASE DATE» Spring 1999

STAR WARS: ROGUE SQUADRON

GENRE» Action
PITCH» As an ace starfighter for the Rebel Alliance's elite Rogue Squadron, players dogfight through an array of 3D worlds while running search and destroy missions against the dreaded galactic Empire.
PICTURE» X-Wing vs. Y-Wing
RELEASE DATE» Spring 1999

MAD GENIUS

GUNMETAL

GENRE» First-person Shooter
PITCH» Armored, mission-based combat on wheels. Corporate evil must be dispatched. Gentlemen, start your engines.
PICTURE» The gritty future-vision scenes from *Terminator*
RELEASE DATE» August 1998

MGM INTERACTIVE

RETURN FIRE II

GENRE» Action
PITCH» Command one of several land, sea, or air vehicles in this game of complex capture the flag. Previewed in issue 92.
PICTURE» A 3D *Return Fire*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

WARGAMES

GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PITCH» Command the forces of humanity or W.O.P.R. in this sequel to the movie. Previewed in issue 86.
PICTURE» *Wargame & Conquer*
RELEASE DATE» Summer 1998

MICROPROSE

CIVILIZATION II: THE TEST OF TIME

GENRE» Turn-based Strategy
PITCH» An extension of the original game, it will sport linked maps, making for larger worlds, city improvements and "transport sites" that let players move between maps. Also included is a fantasy setting based on the Midgard scenario from the *Civ II Fantastic Worlds* add-on and an all-new sci-fi scenario, complete with aliens, a struggling colony, and the ability to conquer an entire solar system. Lastly, they say they'll be pumping up the game with animated units and world graphics.
PICTURE» A quick strike launched at Activision's *Civilization* game
RELEASE DATE» Spring 1999

EUROPEAN AIR WAR

GENRE» Flight Simulation
PITCH» In development for what seems like an eternity, gameplay revolves around quick start play, single missions, and career modes experienced in three dynamic campaigns: the Battle of Britain, or over Europe in 1943 or 1944. It offers some twenty flyable planes, including variants of the P-38, P-51, Spitfire, Me109, and Me262. Previewed in issue 84.
PICTURE» A day when it will actually be on store shelves
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

FALCON 4.0

GENRE» Flight Simulation
PITCH» Well gee, what can be said about this game that hasn't been said over the course of its 30 year development? F-16 sim, superior graphics and flight modeling, advanced campaign system, big multiplayer component, yadda yadda yadda. Previewed a long time ago. Multiple times.
PICTURE» A day when it will actually be on store shelves
RELEASE DATE» The '90s

GUARDIANS: AGENTS OF JUSTICE

GENRE» Turn-based Strategy
PITCH» The curse of the superhero game strikes again. Just as we were going to press, MicroProse announced that they are closing their Austin studio (formerly known as SimTex) and canceling the existing game development on *Guardians*. Any future Austin-developed titles (rumored at one time to be sequels to *Master of Magic* and *Civilization*) will be handled by other MicroProse divisions.
PICTURE» R.I.P.
RELEASE DATE» Canceled

GUNSHIP III

GENRE» Simulation
PITCH» Fly either an Apache, Cobra, or Comanche (or a Hokum or Havoc in multiplayer) across battlefields which can, optionally, be populated by tanks being driven in *M1 Tank Platoon II*.
PICTURE» *Longbow 2* gets tanked
RELEASE DATE» Summer 1999

STAR TREK: KLINGON HONOR GUARD

GENRE» 3D Action
PITCH» This *Star Trek* adaptation of the *Unreal* engine tells the story of a new inductee to theKlingon Honor Guard. Train until you're called away to report for active duty in response to an assassination attempt on Gowron, the leader of the Klingon High Council. Then kill lots of bad guys over 18 maps.
PICTURE» *Unreal: The Next Generation*
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

STARSHIP TROOPERS

GENRE» 3D Action
PITCH» Battle bugs in this 3D game played from a chase perspective; think *Tomb Raider* without the curves. This is no "one man against the world" game: in addition to planning the strategic ele-

ments of a mission, the player can eventually gain control over the entire squad.
PICTURE» *Terra Nova*-lite
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION BIRTH OF THE FEDERATION

GENRE» Turn-based Strategy
PITCH» The game with the longest name known to man gives the player control of the Federation, the Klingons, the Ferengi, the Romulans, or the Cardassians from their early days immediately after the discovery of interstellar travel through the development of the advanced technologies of the *Star Trek* universe. Combat can either be resolved by the computer, or general orders can be issued to ships, which will then fight accordingly in a non-interactive 3D rendered view of the battle.
PICTURE» *Rebellion* minus that Force nonsense
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

TOP GUN: HORNET'S NEST

GENRE» Flight Simulation
PITCH» Don Maverick's flight suit (whew!) and jump into an F/A-18 Hornet in this sim-lite, sequel to the movie (in terms of storyline) and to MicroProse's earlier *Top Gun* (in terms of engine).
PICTURE» *Top Gun*
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

X-COM ALLIANCE

GENRE» 3D Action/Strategy
PITCH» Command a team of lost X-COM squadies in battle against familiar and new alien opponents while dealing with strategic issues (don't worry, there's just a touch of strategy).
PICTURE» *Unreal-COM*
RELEASE DATE» 1999

MICROSOFT

AGE OF EMPIRES EXPANSION PACK

GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PITCH» Focusing on the ancient Roman Empire, it will have new civilizations, unique units and additional campaigns.
PICTURE» Age of Expansion Packs
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

AGE OF EMPIRES II: THE AGE OF KINGS

GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PITCH» The game starts just as the Roman Empire bites the historic dust, covering a period from basically 450AD to 1450AD and allowing players to advance through the Middle, Dark, Feudal, Castle and Gunpowder Ages. Multiple cultures (each with their own unique unit), improved diplomacy, a modified resource system, trade, improved pathfinding, production queues, advanced tactic commands, unit facing and a change in scale round out the new features. Previewed in issue 90.
PICTURE» Age of Sequels
RELEASE DATE» Spring 1999

CLOSE COMBAT III

GENRE» Real-time Wargame
PITCH» This is the working title of the latest in the award-winning wargame series. Set in the East Front and spanning the entire conflict (basically 1941-1945), it features scads of improvements, including larger maps, a more involved role-playing-like system for managing your troops as they carryover from battle to battle, off-screen artillery and increased armored vehicle control.
PICTURE» *Close Combat*-ski
RELEASE DATE» Spring 1999

COMBAT FLIGHT SIMULATOR

GENRE» Flight Simulation
PITCH» Based on the current *Flight Simulator* engine, you can fly in two scripted campaigns (Battle of Britain, Battle for Europe) and fly eight different aircraft: the Spitfire Mk I and IX, Hurricane Mk I, Messerschmitt Me-109 E and G, Focke Wulf FW-190 A8, P-47D Thunderbolt and the P-51D Mustang.
PICTURE» *Flight Sim* goes to war
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

INERTIA

GENRE» Racing Combat
PITCH» This is the working title for an game where you outfit your car with various weapons, take it into 3D accelerated environments and complete missions for fun and profit. The game has a wonderfully bizarre physics model (hence the name) that forces you to not only consider the firepower of your vehicle but also its weight balance—the game models all four corners of the car independently, allowing lurid slides when weight shifts.
PICTURE» A futuristic *Carmageddon* with guns
RELEASE DATE» 1999

PINBALL ARCADE

GENRE» Traditional
PITCH» A collection of five classic pinball tables from "the good old days®."
PICTURE» Uh, pinball?
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

REVENGE OF ARCADE

GENRE» Action
PITCH» Retro gaming rears it ugly head, as we have *Ms. Pac Man*, *Xevious*, *Rally-X*, *Mappy* and *Motos*. Wacca wacca.
PICTURE» *Xevious* still rules
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

Star Wars: Force Commander

Wargames

Top Gun: Hornet's Nest

Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine

Grim Fandango

Civilization II: The Test of Time

Starship Troopers
Birth of the Federation

X-COM Alliance

MICROSOFT

MOTOCROSS MADNESS

GENRE» Racing
PITCH» With the original *Monster Truck Madness* and its sequel already flying the flag for tasteful, cerebral entertainment, leave it to the folks at Microsoft to take this style of game even further into the dirt.

Motocross Madness features superb 3D accelerated graphics and plenty of places to show them off, including 20 stadium tracks with an editor for creating your own, multiple stunt quarries, Baja races and entertaining "national races" that take place in quarry-like settings. In all instances you'll be catching serious air, and while you're contemplating the hardness of the dirt on which you're about to land, you can perform 16 different stunts.

While it may appear to be a mere arcade game, extended play reveals some seriously "right" physics going on behind the scenes. ("Right," of course, is a relative term. It may not be 100% realistic, but the feel is superb.) While this is all fine and dandy, what really sets the game apart is the feeling of extreme pain you get when taking yet another nasty spill. You'll groan. You'll reach for your groin. You'll wonder if you'll ever father (or bear) children. While it's optimized for any analog controller, when paired with Microsoft's Sidewinder Freestyle Pro, this may be the most entertaining race game on the market. Period.

PICTURE» The opposite of an incredibly painful groin injury
RELEASE DATE» September 1998

Motocross Madness

OBLIVION

GENRE» Online Space Combat
PICTURE» Developed internally by Microsoft's (incredibly well-funded) research arm, players can either be pilots, gunners or commanders as they fly anything from tugs to carriers in an environment full of hundreds of fellow humans.
PICTURE» *Online Commander*
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

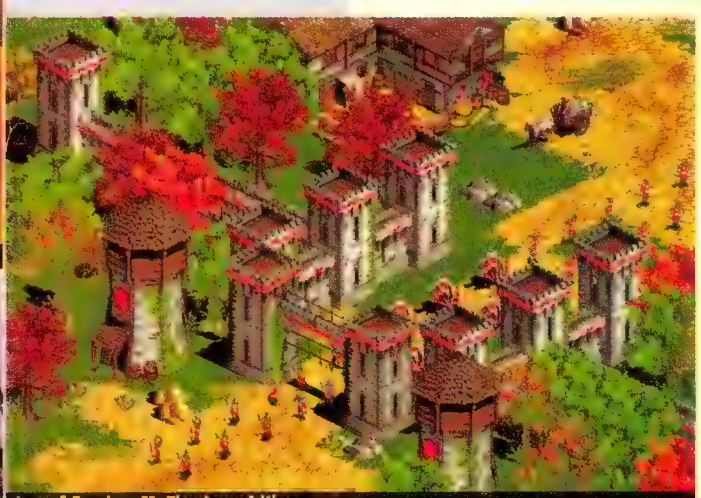
MINDSCAPE ENTERTAINMENT

CREATURES 2

GENRE» Simulation
PITCH» A follow-up to 1996's *Creatures*, this title offers more sophisticated AI that will allow the Norns to be more advanced, with more complex internal systems and actual organs.
PICTURE» A Mogwai
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

THE BLACKSTONE CHRONICLES: AN ADVENTURE IN TERROR

GENRE» Adventure
PITCH» Based on John Saul's series of books, this game by Bob Bates at Legend Entertainment takes place in an asylum in a small New England town, about 40 years after



Age of Empires II: The Age of Kings

URBAN ASSAULT

GENRE» 3D Action/Strategy
PITCH» Played from a first-person perspective, you control 15 types of combat vehicles. An overhead transparent map pops up to allow you to direct your units, or you can personally take over any of the various tanks, helicopters, jets, jeeps, bombers and satellites. Previewed in issue 93.
PICTURE» A grungy *Battlezone*
RELEASE DATE» Summer 1998

Combat Flight Simulator

Urban Assault

INTERNET GAMING ZONE

ASHERON'S CALL

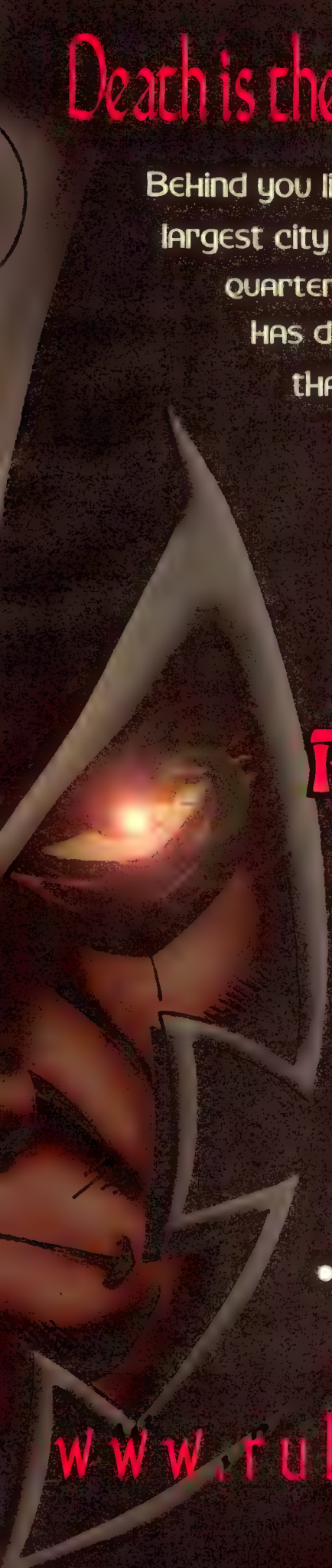
GENRE» Online Role-playing
PICTURE» This 3D *Ultima Online* competitor features a detailed backstory, customizable character graphics, quests, plots and an emphasis on adventure.
PICTURE» *Ultima Ascension Online*
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

Oblivion

Shogo: Mobile Armor Division

Death is the only reward for those who fail.

Behind you lie the gates to the stronghold of New Jollis, the largest city in all of South Vormis. You stand in the central quarter before the legendary Big Rocs' Cafe. The Duke has declared a state of martial law until the brigands that have been terrorizing his lands are defeated. Great riches and fame await the heroes that succeed, and their names shall be sung by troubadours throughout the land.



RUBIES of EVENTIDE

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- Scores of shops with thousands of items
- See what your character sees in a 3D world
- Hundreds of magic spells that you can alter to suit your needs

www.rubiesofeventide.com

the originally chronicled events.
PICTURE» Jeanne D'Arc in a straitjacket
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

MONOLITH

GET MEDIEVAL

GENRE» Action
PITCH» Addictive, quip-filled misadventures of four eccentric dungeon-bound characters.
PICTURE» *Gauntlet*, *Gauntlet*, *Gauntlet* and, of course, *Gauntlet*
RELEASE DATE» September 1998

RAGE OF MAGES

GENRE» Role-playing/Strategy
PITCH» Russian-made fantasy role-playing with real-time combat and over 300 kinds of weapons and armor.
PICTURE» 3D terrain, tons of spells and enemies: fantasy overkill
RELEASE DATE» October 1998

SHOGO: MOBILE ARMOR DIVISION

GENRE» 3D Action
PITCH» The LithTech engine debuts with this anime-inspired shooter. Launch rockets and don battle suits while negotiating a labyrinthine, story-driven scenario.
PICTURE» A game so gorgeous that Monolith had to snatch the rights back from Microsoft at the last minute (at least that's what they say)
RELEASE DATE» October 1998

MULTITUDE

FIRETEAM

GENRE» Online Action
PITCH» Team-based online squad combat game where cooperation is key. Voice communications are facilitated by the included headset.
PICTURE» *Sole Survivor*, but with a purpose
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

NOVALOGIC

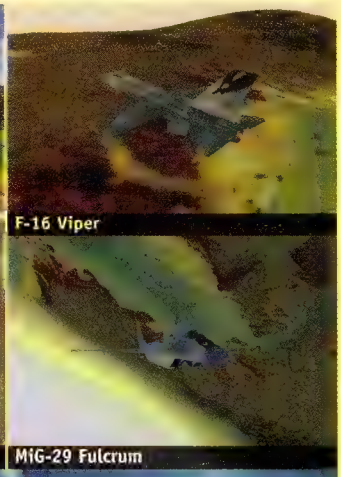
DELTA FORCE

GENRE» 3D Action/Simulation
PITCH» Command a team from the elite army Delta Force unit on realistic missions in a game that's being billed as "an action game with sim-like elements."
PICTURE» *SpecOps* with voxels
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

F-16 VIPER

GENRE» Flight Simulation
PITCH» Fly the F-16 for the first time in a NovaLogic game. *Viper* is the multi-role counterpoint to *F-22 Raptor*'s air superiority emphasis.
PICTURE» *MiG-29 Fulcrum*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

Delta Force


F-16 Viper

MiG-29 Fulcrum

O.D.T.

Panzer Elite

Drakan

MIG-29 FULCRUM

GENRE» Flight Simulation
PITCH» Fly the Russian air superiority fighter through a number of single-player missions (some of them corresponding to those in *F-16 Viper*) or online against F-16s and F-22s on NovaWorld.
PICTURE» *F-16 Viper*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

PSYGNOSIS

ATTACK OF THE SAUCERMEN

GENRE» 3D Action
PITCH» Immersive environments like those seen in *Croc* and *Mario 64* get a bargain-basement execution on PC, with a '50s sci-fi B-movie motif.
PICTURE» *Mars Attacks!* without the budget or Nicholson
RELEASE DATE» Spring 1999

DRAKAN

GENRE» 3D Action/Adventure
PITCH» Beautiful young Rynn and faithful dragon companion Arokh soar through lush environments as they seek to vanquish evil sorcerer Kulrik.
PICTURE» Easy-on-the-eyes aerial and land-based 3D combat, with a Tolkein-esque twist
RELEASE DATE» January 1999

EXPERT POOL

GENRE» Sports
PITCH» American, French, and British billiards action with a marked emphasis on realism.
PICTURE» *Virtual Pool* tweaked through the virtual roof
RELEASE DATE» Spring 1999

GLOBAL DOMINATION

GENRE» Strategy/Action
PITCH» An "unclassifiable" hybrid of genres intended for any megalomaniac with a taste for global conquest. Previewed in issue 92.
PICTURE» The scene in *Never Say Never Again* sans electric shocks)
RELEASE DATE» October 1998

NATIONS: FIGHTER COMMAND

GENRE» Flight Simulation
PITCH» WWII dogfight action that can go either way: exhaustive accuracy or arcade action.
PICTURE» The game Spielberg might make if he was actually hands-on with *Dreamworks Interactive*
RELEASE DATE» Spring 1999

NEWMAN/HAAS RACING

GENRE» Racing
PITCH» From Playstation to PC comes famous drivers, famous tracks, and that famous Paul Newman brand name. But none of the money goes to charity!
PICTURE» Your local Indy racetrack, digitized
RELEASE DATE» August 1998

O.D.T.

GENRE» 3D Action/Adventure
PITCH» Action, exploration and puzzle-solving – in that order -- in a 3D world of magic and mayhem.
PICTURE» *Dungeons and Dragons* meets *Doom*; in other words, third-person *Hexen* (with a biomechanical bent).
RELEASE DATE» October 1998

PANZER ELITE

GENRE» Tank Simulation
PITCH» Another upcoming WWII combat sim title; this one casts you as Americans or Germans. The designer, Wings Simulations, consulted with the Panzer museum to achieve greater accuracy.
PICTURE» Newsreel footage-style, earth-bound *Battlezone*
RELEASE DATE» Spring 1999

PRO 18: WORLD TOUR GOLF

GENRE» Sports
PITCH» Hit the links around the world, using a brand new "four-click" swing mechanism.
PICTURE» Every other golf game in

enemy infestation

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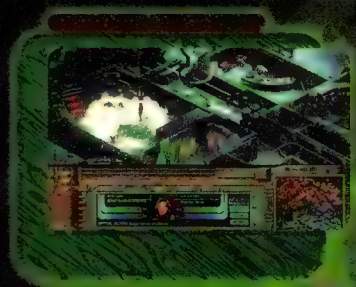
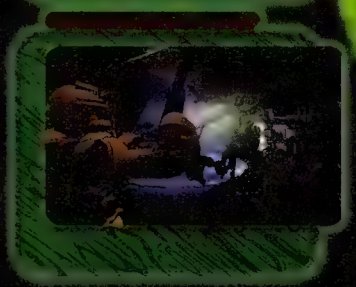
new worlds has
unleashed a new terror.





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RATING PENDING
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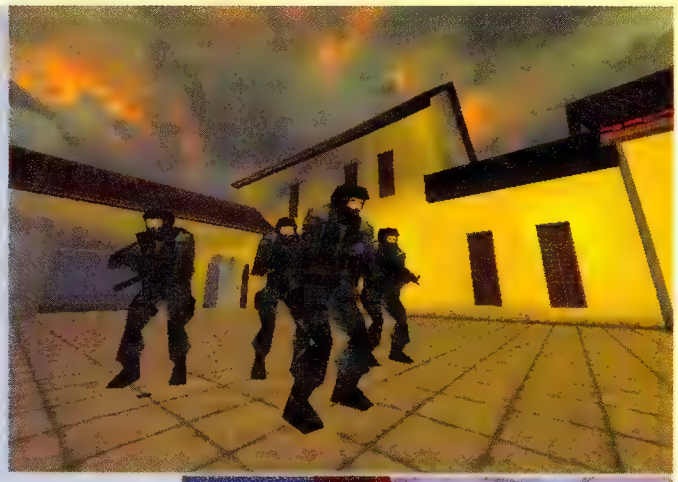
RED STORM

RAINBOW SIX

GENRE» 3D Action/Simulation
PITCH» While there have been games that have been based on Tom Clancy books before, they've primarily been simulations—*Red Storm Rising* and *Hunt for Red October* are perhaps the best known. *Rainbow Six* is different. It places you in the shoes (or combat boots) of a variety of characters as they work through some 17 different tactical-level missions against a variety of terrorist targets. The game mixes familiar characters (so that's what Mr. Clark looks like... and hey! There's Chavez!) with realistic weapons and 3D environments (similar to Zombie's *SpecOps*). From 20 possible characters you assemble a team of operatives for each mission; choose well or you might fail for lack of a critical person. Also, any losses you suffer are carried forward, so if you lose someone in an early mission you'll have to do without their expertise for the rest of the game.

One big difference between this game and *SpecOps* is the pre-mission planning. You'll get a briefing on the situation and, using that and maps of the area, you'll set up actions for your team members to follow. Once in the mission, things happen in real time, from a first- or third-person perspective. You can hop to different team leaders during a mission (or their seconds-in-command if a leader is killed), and team coordination and timing are key.

In addition to solo play you can play with friends; multiplay can be cooperative, competitive, or what Red Storm calls "Free Internet Play," and it will support real-time voice over the Internet. Red Storm also plans an add-on pack, due out at the end of the year.
PICTURE» *SpecOps* gets Clancy-ed
RELEASE DATE» August 1998



the world, but with an international flavor and, of course, a new "four-click" swing mechanism.
RELEASE DATE» October 1998

SENTINEL RETURNS

GENRE» Strategy
PITCH» Dated classic *Sentinel* gets a facelift. Climb a mountain, absorb energy, and try not to get spotted. The soundtrack is by horror virtuoso John Carpenter. Previewed in issue 92.
PICTURE» A thinking man's king of the mountain
RELEASE DATE» August 1998

RED ORB

BAJA 1000 RACING

GENRE» Racing
PITCH» This title will reproduce the Baja 1000 race, mile for mile, as it incorporates a four-wheel independent physics model that will add a sim element to the game.
PICTURE» *Monster Truck Sombrero*
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

EXTREME WARFARE

GENRE» 3D Action
PITCH» Developed by Trilobyte, this is about as far from their previous titles as you can get. In addition to playing the time-honored foot soldier, gamers can also pilot any of four vehicle types: light, Jeep-like vehicles; tanks; attack helicopters; and transport helicopters.
PICTURE» *Tanarus* on Mars
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

PRINCE OF PERSIA 3D

GENRE» 3D Action/Adventure
PITCH» This game will utilize many of the features of its predecessor, including traps and a simple interface for running, jumping, climbing, and sword fighting in a *Tales of the Arabian Nights* story co-authored by *Prince of Persia* creator Jordan Mechner.
PICTURE» Lara in a turban
RELEASE DATE» Spring 1999

WARLORDS III: DARKLORDS RISING

GENRE» Turn-based Strategy
PITCH» Set some 1100 years after *Warlords III*, this game portrays the return of Lords Bane and Sartek, those two destruction-loving dudes, to the land of Etheria, where they wreak merry havoc across a number of new campaigns and missions. Previewed in issue 93.
PICTURE» *Warlords III*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

RED STORM ENTERTAINMENT

DOMINANT SPECIES

GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PITCH» Defend your planet and its creatures and resources against the nasty aliens known as humans
PICTURE» *Command & Conquer* meets *Warbreeds* and goes 3D
RELEASE DATE» October 1998

RUTHLESS.COM

GENRE» Turn-based Strategy
PITCH» Business is war, and you get to use everything in your arsenal—be it legal or not—in this simultaneous turn-based game.
PICTURE» *Entrepreneur*, but meaner
RELEASE DATE» November 1998

RIPCORD GAMES

ENEMY INFESTATION

GENRE» Action
PITCH» As commander of a human colony on a distant world, you're responsible for fighting off an invasion of Mantis-like creatures from outer space. In a horror thriller using 3D isometric perspective, you'll battle bugs in single and several multiplayer modes.
PICTURE» *Banzai Mantis*
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

FADING SUNS: STARSHIP DIPLOMACY

GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PITCH» Return to the world of *Emperor of the Fading Suns* in the year 4996, when knights will have been bold. The Questing Knights have recovered the Lost Worlds of Humanity, and it's up to you to become a dominant diplomatic and military force. Play as a mercenary, pirate, trader or diplomat in this single-player and (up to eight person) multiplayer cross-genre title.
PICTURE» *Diplomat of the Fading Suns*
RELEASE DATE» 1999

GUARDIAN

GENRE» Action
PITCH» Running With Scissors (*Postal*) has gone a touch more humanitarian with this title. Players will join the Umbreks who are on a galactic mission to stop the marauding Nullids who are about to have Earthlings for breakfast.
PICTURE» Controversy doesn't guarantee sales
RELEASE DATE» 1999

LEGEND OF BLADE MASTER

GENRE» Action/Role-playing
PITCH» In a fantasy realm, you'll play Eric, a young man sworn to avenge his father's death and to defeat the evil Vamarian Cult which is threatening the realm. Single and up to three-player multiplayer games are available.
PICTURE» *Armor Command* on fairy dust
RELEASE DATE» 1999

MAJESTY: EMPIRES OF THE DARKLANDS

GENRE» Strategy/Role-playing
PITCH» You are a king without a country, and must set up a fantasy-style town, and establish guilds, marketplaces and other structures. Then, manage resources, recruit a party for adventuring and questing and expand your empire in this 3D single and multiplayer game with a random scenario generator.
PICTURE» *Sim Caesarfall*
RELEASE DATE» 1999

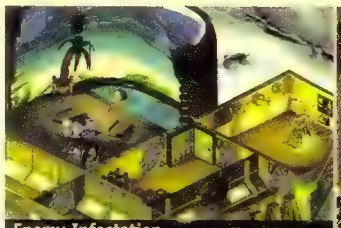
SPACE BUNNIES MUST DIE!

GENRE» Action
PITCH» You'll play Allison Huxter (think *Natural Born Killers'*

Mallory) in a third-person 3D romp to save the world from killer rabbits. Side plots include the struggle to rescue your sister and waitressing a double shift at the local diner. Country music abounds as you leap, climb and flip your way to the top of Space Bunny Mountain.
PICTURE» *Lupine Raider*
RELEASE DATE» September 1998

TERRA VICTUS

GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PITCH» Set in a neo-futuristic realm, players will command an elite strike force of rebels battling against Max Von Harmer, a villain bent on turning Earth into a wasteland. The game will come with 25 single-player missions, or can be played head-to-head in a multiplayer clash.
PICTURE» *Command & Harmer*
RELEASE DATE» 1999


Enemy Infestation

Space Bunnies Must Die!

Sentinel Returns

Conflict of Nations

Extreme Warfare

Yoot's Tower

SEGA ENTERTAINMENT

CONFLICT OF NATIONS

GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PITCH» What if instead of controlling just the armies, you also controlled the leaders of the armies and of the nation as well? Previewed in issue 92 as *Emperor*.
PICTURE» *Command & Conquer* with really big heads
RELEASE DATE» November 1998

ENEMY ZERO

GENRE» 3D Action/Adventure
PITCH» The movie *Alien* without the cat.
PICTURE» *Doom* meets *Alien*, but without the cat
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD

GENRE» 3D Action
PITCH» A spooky house, a crazed scientist, shambling zombies, a gun, and five colors of blood—what more could you ask for?
PICTURE» *VirtuaCop* after eating funky donuts
RELEASE DATE» Summer 1998

RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP 2

GENRE» Racing
PITCH» Straight from the arcade to your PC (without even a Saturn pit-stop), *Rally Championship 2* will feature eight cars, at least six tracks, network play, variable weather, and even a 10 year championship mode
PICTURE» Take a guess…
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

SONIC R

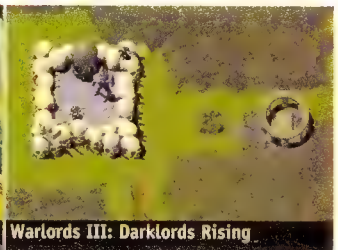
GENRE» Racing
PITCH» Sonic and friends in a friendly foot race through five 3D tracks in six different race modes.
PICTURE» An arcade NASCAR racing game without cars and crude men
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

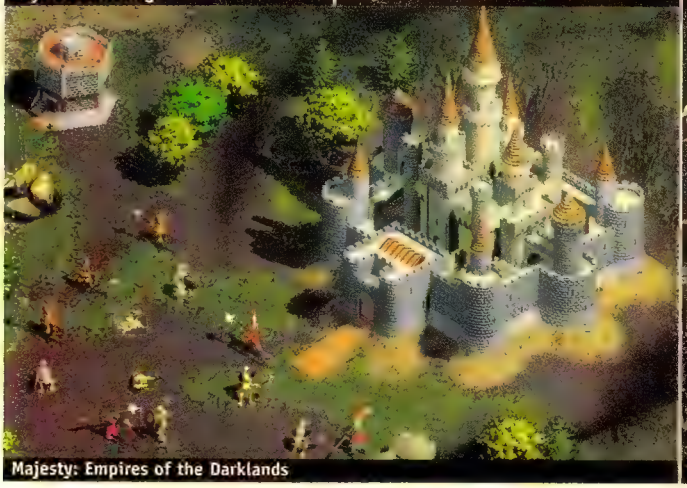
YOOT'S TOWER

GENRE» Strategy
PITCH» The creator of *SimTower* brings his game into the modern age. Towers can now be built in different locations and have different styles and functions; new ones will be made available later on. Micromanage businesses like restaurants and movie theaters, and expect more intelligent AI from your tower residents.
PICTURE» *SimTower* on steroids
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

Baja 1000 Racing

Prince of Persia 3D


Warlords III: Darklords Rising


Majesty: Empires of the Darklands

Babylon 5

The House of the Dead

SIERRA

SIERRA FX

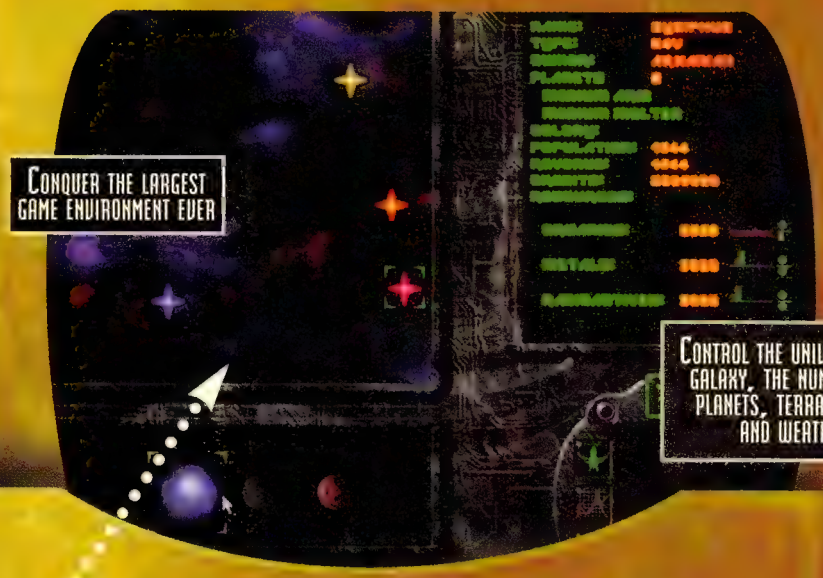
BABYLON 5

GENRE» 3D Space Shooter
PITCH» This is the working title of the game that will let players fly a variety of ships from the series. The game is also said to have "unlimited" replay thanks to the complex *Babylon 5* universe. In addition to the single-player game, multiplayer will sport head-to-head and cooperative multiplayer options.
PICTURE» *Syndicated-Series Commander*
RELEASE DATE» 1999

MIDDLE EARTH

GENRE» Online Role-playing
PITCH» A massively multiplayer role-playing game based on *The Realm* online gaming engine, the game will be set several generations after the end of the Third Ages. Players will be able

WHERE OTHER STRATEGY GAMES LEFT OFF...



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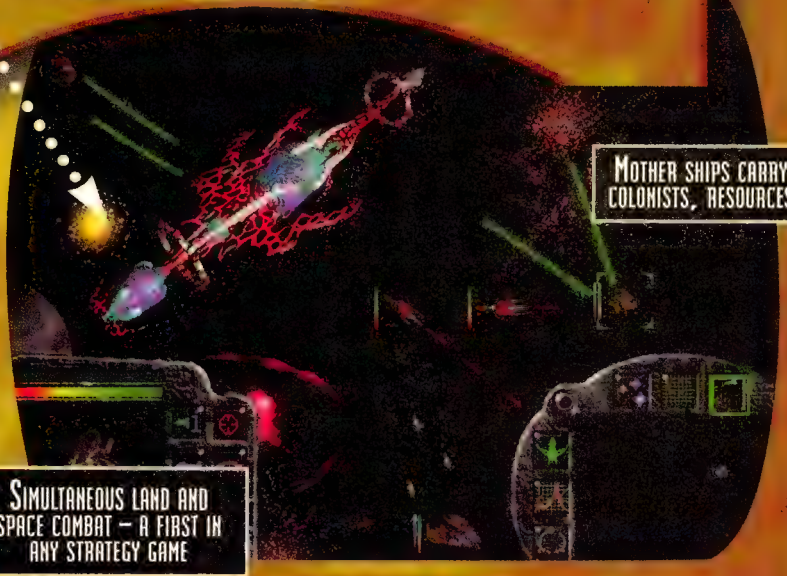

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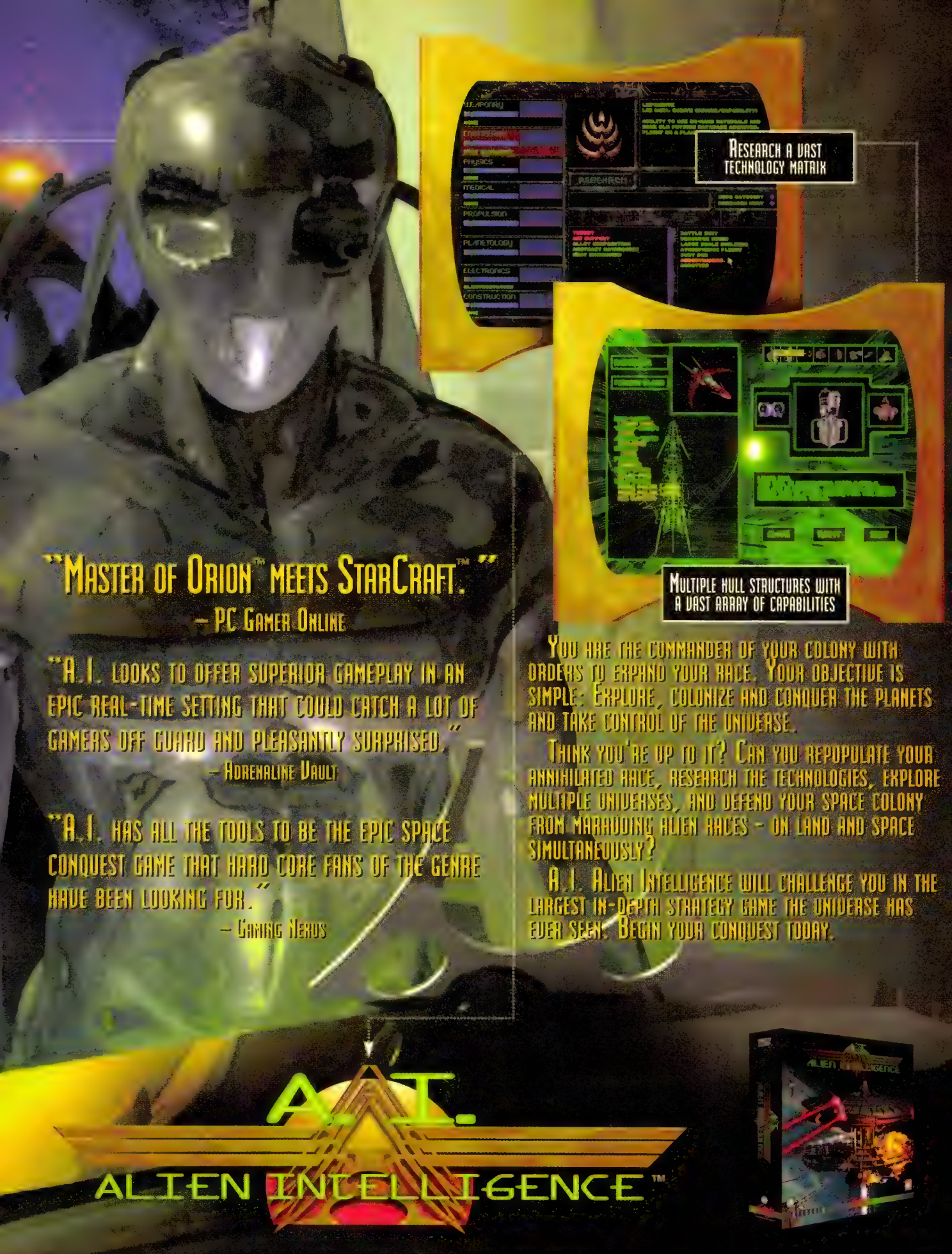
RESEARCH A VAST TECHNOLOGY MATRIX
MULTIPLE HULL STRUCTURES WITH A VAST ARRAY OF CAPABILITIES
"MASTER OF ORION™ MEETS STARCRAFT™."
– PC GAMER ONLINE
"A.I. LOOKS TO OFFER SUPERIOR GAMEPLAY IN AN EPIC REAL-TIME SETTING THAT COULD CATCH A LOT OF GAMERS OFF GUARD AND PLEASANTLY SURPRISED."
– ADRENALINE VAULT
"A.I. HAS ALL THE TOOLS TO BE THE EPIC SPACE CONQUEST GAME THAT HARD CORE FANS OF THE GENRE HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR."
– GAMING NEXUS
YOU ARE THE COMMANDER OF YOUR COLONY WITH ORDERS TO EXPAND YOUR RACE. YOUR OBJECTIVE IS SIMPLE: EXPLORE, COLONIZE AND CONQUER THE PLANETS AND TAKE CONTROL OF THE UNIVERSE.
THINK YOU'RE UP TO IT? CAN YOU REPOPULATE YOUR ANNIHILATED RACE, RESEARCH THE TECHNOLOGIES, EXPLORE MULTIPLE UNIVERSES, AND DEFEND YOUR SPACE COLONY FROM MARAUDING ALIEN RACES – ON LAND AND SPACE SIMULTANEOUSLY?
A.I. ALIEN INTELLIGENCE WILL CHALLENGE YOU IN THE LARGEST IN-DEPTH STRATEGY GAME THE UNIVERSE HAS EVER SEEN. BEGIN YOUR CONQUEST TODAY.
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to play different races, such as hobbits, and explore locations such as Rivendell or the mines of Moria. This will be the first title in Sierra's recently acquired license, so expect other products (like perhaps a strategy game) in the future.
PICTURE» *Ultima Online*-killer or Bilbo Lagging?
RELEASE DATE» 1999

NAVY SEALS

GENRE» 3D Action/Strategy
PITCH» Based on the *Rogue Warrior* novels of ex-Seal officer Richard Marcinko, you get to plan missions, issue out equipment, and control multiple Seals in action. Weapons and equipment will represent the current Seal arsenal, including the H&K MP5N submachine gun and the Zodiac surface approach raft.
PICTURE» Charlie Sheen movies
RELEASE DATE» 1999

QUEST FOR GLORY V: DRAGON FIRE

GENRE» Adventure/Role-playing
PITCH» The final chapter of the popular series, it takes place in the same world as previous games. The Ruler has been assassinated by a deadly poison and an unknown assailant, and in order to solve the crime, you must enter the Rites of Rulership and prove your own worthiness to become King.
PICTURE» *Quest for Glory 1-4*
RELEASE DATE» September 1998

SIERRA SPORTS

BASKETBALL '99

GENRE» Sports
PITCH» Sierra licensed the basketball engine from GTE's ugly but well-playing *NCAA Championship Basketball* and added a new-fangled polygonal engine. Full career mode is included, but there will be no salary caps—the NBA forbids it.
PICTURE» Sierra got game?
RELEASE DATE» November 1998

FANTASY SPORTS PRO 99

GENRE» Sports
PITCH» Control fantasy sports leagues in football, baseball, basketball, or hockey. Internet capabilities will let gamers from around the world manage against each other, and Stats, Inc. tracks all relevant player data.
PICTURE» Sport geek nirvana
RELEASE DATE» Summer 1998

FOOTBALL PRO '99

GENRE» Sports
PITCH» The *Front Page Sports* name is gone, but the basic features remain. A brand new 3D arcade engine (with fully polygonal players) and AI should be welcome additions, and the multiplayer options will entice players to participate in sanctioned tournaments throughout the year.
PICTURE» *FPS* RIP
RELEASE DATE» September 1998

GOLF PRO '99

GENRE» Sports
PITCH» Lots of refinements for this game, with improvements in the visuals, the swing interface and the multiplayer support.
PICTURE» Got a Tiger (Woods) in your tank?
RELEASE DATE» September 1998

GRAND PRIX LEGENDS

GENRE» Racing
PITCH» Based on the 1967 Grand Prix Season, slip and slide your way around the track in a wingless car with treaded tires. An all-new physics engine from Papyrus should create what may be the most realistic race game on the market.
PICTURE» *IndyCar Racing* with a really bouncy suspension
RELEASE DATE» August 1998

NASCAR RACING 3

GENRE» Racing
PITCH» The *Grand Prix Legends* physics pop up again in this sequel. The game will focus on the 1998 season, so all the real-world drivers, tracks, and teams should be in the box. Too bad they can't add cheating....
PICTURE» *NASCAR 2*, only better
RELEASE DATE» Spring 1999

SIERRA STUDIOS

CAESAR III

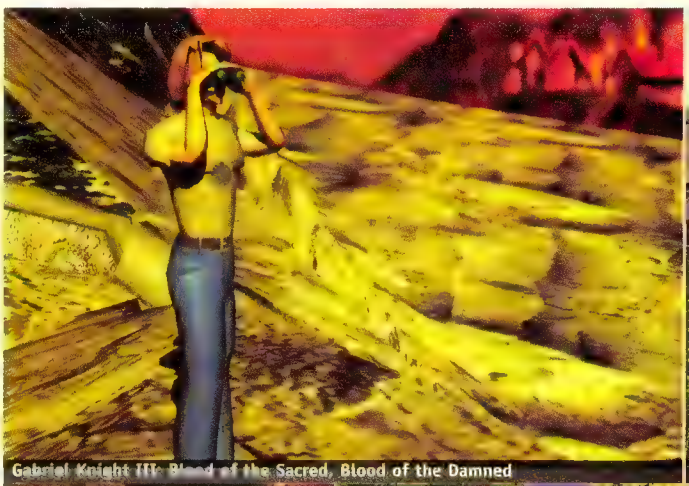
GENRE» Strategy
PICTURE» Build thriving Roman cities that can produce armies strong enough to unify the Empire. Gameplay now takes place on one large map, putting city development and combat on the same level, with battles taking place on the streets of your town. Other improvements include an improved interface and detailed animations, structures, and terrain elements.
PICTURE» *SimRoman 30 AD*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

GABRIEL KNIGHT III: BLOOD OF THE SACRED, BLOOD OF THE DAMNED

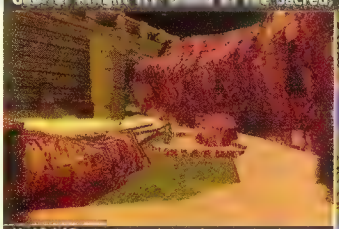
GENRE» 3D Adventure
PITCH» Gabe's back, and he's looking mighty square—polygonal, to be more specific. Now in full 3D, Gabe finds himself in a small European village at the behest of a dethroned royal to investigate a recent rash of bizarre, possibly supernatural goings-on. While the game is heavily narrative, the new 3D engine and AI will supposedly afford the player a free reign of the environment and the ability to stray from the main story to pursue sub-plots.
PICTURE» Gabe's voodoo meets 3Dfx's Voodoo
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

HALF-LIFE

GENRE» 3D Action
PICTURE» A year late, what looked revolutionary at the last E3 show now looks like all of the other *Quake II*-based games touting superior single-player experiences. What does it have that *Daikatana* and *Sin*, among others, do not? Well, its environments are really bright and colorful, and their real-world setting is a welcome respite from the endless parade of alien worlds and dungeons. Beyond that, we'll see....
PICTURE» The other 3D shooters touting advanced AI and a plot
RELEASE DATE» September 1998


Gabriel Knight III: Blood of the Sacred, Blood of the Damned

Grand Prix Legends


Half-Life

King's Quest: Mask of Eternity

Caesar III

Tom Clancy's RAINBOW SIX

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Red Storm

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Homeworld

Everquest

Dark Side of the Moon

Return to Krondor

NFL Gameday 99

Luftwaffe Commander

HOMEWORLD
GENRE» 3D Action/Strategy
PITCH» You're a lord in a peaceful galaxy. Out of nowhere come some conquerors, sending your race to the edge of the galaxy. Now it's time to take it back, in multi-ship battles you can view from multiple camera angles.
PICTURE» The combat in *Rebellion* with less clicking
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

KING'S QUEST: MASK OF ETERNITY
GENRE» 3D Action/Adventure
PICTURE» In a *real* departure from its predecessors, Graham, Valanice, Rosella and clan are gone. You're a guy named Connor, who runs around a 3D world looking for the shards of the Mask of Eternity in order to save the world.
PICTURE» A change of pace for fans of the series
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

RETURN TO KRONDOR
GENRE» Role-playing
PITCH» Return to author Raymond E. Feist's world of Midkemia, where players will be able to assume the roles of five main characters: Squire James, the reformed thief; the Keshian sorceress Jazhara; William Condoin, son of the magician Pug; Brother Solon, a Warrior-Priest of Ishap; and the wizard Kendaric. The goal of the game: recover the Tear of the Gods, which was lost at the bottom of the Bitter Sea after a pirate raid.
PICTURE» *Return to Baldur's Gate*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

SIMON & SCHUSTER INTERACTIVE

SABRINA THE TEENAGE WITCH: SPELLBOUND
GENRE» Adventure
PITCH» Work your way through 10 "wacky" predicaments as you fight to free Sabrina from captivity, after which you will earn your Honorary Witch's License. **PICTURE»** Melissa Joan Hart naked (in your dreams)
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

STAR TREK: STARSHIP CREATOR
GENRE» Strategy
PITCH» Design, build and launch your own starships and send them off on missions as you appoint appropriate Starfleet personnel to man (or woman) the bridges. Missions you have designed and your ships may be traded over the Internet.
PICTURE» Do-it-yourself-*Star Trek Captain's Chair*
RELEASE DATE» October 1998

SONY

CYBERSTRIKE 2
GENRE» Online Action
PITCH» Co-developed with Simutronics, four teams of up to eight players compete online, commanding giant fighting machines in a struggle for control of several worlds. Accelerated 3D mayhem for both solo and multiplayer fans.
PICTURE» *MechWarrior*-lite
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

EVERQUEST
GENRE» Online Role-playing
PITCH» A vast array of classes and races, all presented in visually stunning accelerated 3D. Online play with the depth of a solo RPG and the interactivity of an online game.
PICTURE» *Ultima Online* in 3D meets AD&D on steroids, on the Internet.
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

NFL GAMEDAY 99
GENRE» Sports
PITCH» The hit Playstation football game converted for the PC, with 3D acceleration and Internet play. Action-oriented, but with gobs of stats and coaching features.
PICTURE» Your favorite console football game, but much better looking and with multiplayer support even for action modes.
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

SOUTHPEAK INTERACTIVE

20,000 LEAGUES: THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES
GENRE» Adventure
PITCH» With a mixture of real and rendered sets, this sequel to Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* places you in the Nautilus as part of a research team that becomes endangered when many factions are chasing you to acquire some pretty valuable onboard technology.
PICTURE» *The Undersea World of Temüjin Cousteau*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1999

DARK SIDE OF THE MOON
GENRE» Adventure
PITCH» Discover your own history and that of the planet Cepheus-6 where you are investigating the mysterious death of your uncle whose mining claim on the planet led to his demise. Using full motion video on rendered sets, *Temüjin*'s Video Reality engine has been modified for more realistic navigation.
PICTURE» *Temüjin* in outer space
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

WARNER BROTHERS TITLES
GENRE» Multiple
PITCH» Via an exclusive agreement with Warner Brothers, a series of entertainment products will feature many of the most beloved characters in the Warner Brothers realm. Included will be: *Pinky & The Brain's World Conquest*, a yet-untitled *Animaniacs* game, *Animated Jigsaws* filled with Looney Tune madness, and *Crazy Paint*, an interactive coloring book.
PICTURE» Wabbit Twacks
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

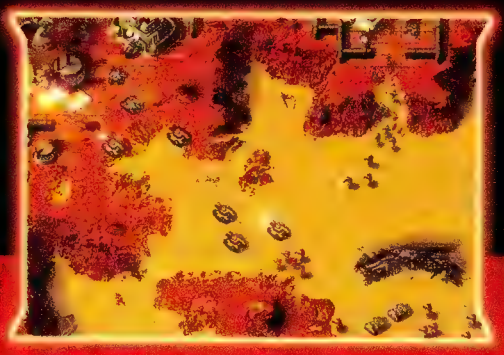
SSI

FIGHTING STEEL
GENRE» Wargame
PITCH» Revisit the sunset of the big-gun ships during WW II as you command vessels of the U.S., Japanese, German, and British navies. Previewed in issue 91.
PICTURE» A better-looking *Great Naval Battles* without the sim parts
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

HARPOON
GENRE» Wargame
PITCH» The hardcore modern

Recreated for the new millennium the classic Dune II returns

ALL THE FAVORITE UNITS FROM THE ORIGINAL.



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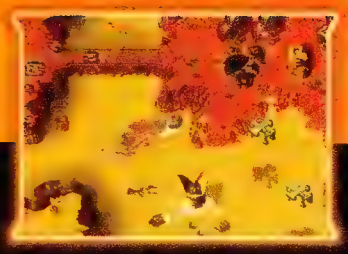

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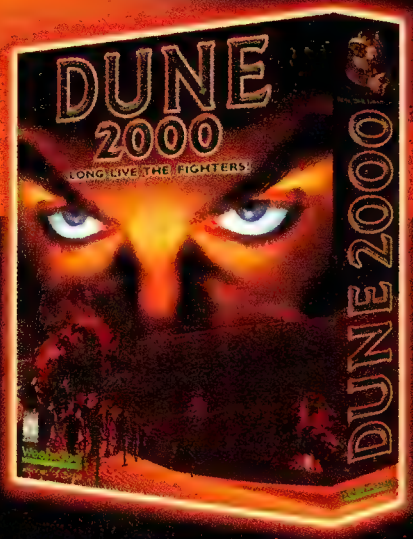

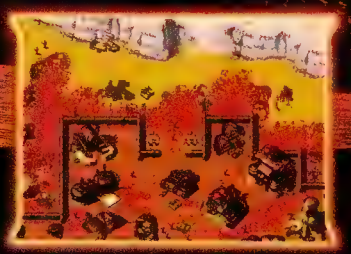

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naval wargame series gets a new member, this one with a much prettier face, the new *Harpoon* rules-set, and more accessibility.
PICTURE» *Harpoon*, Jane's *Fleet Command*, *Fighting Steel*
RELEASE DATE» 1999

IMPERIALISM 2
GENRE» Turn-based Strategy
PITCH» Take *Imperialism* and dial the years back to the Age of Exploration; like reality, your goal isn't so much conquest of the New World as much as it is exploitation of it to help you in conquering the *Old* World.
PICTURE» *Diplomacy* meets *Seven Cities of Gold*
RELEASE DATE» Sping 1999

LUFTWAFFE COMMANDER
GENRE» Flight Simulation
PITCH» Fly the career of a German Luftwaffe pilot from the Spanish Civil War through the end of WW II. Previewed in issue 93.
PICTURE» About a dozen other WW II sims, but German flavored
RELEASE DATE» 1999

PEOPLE'S GENERAL
GENRE» Turn-based Strategy/Wargame
PITCH» Coalition powers (including the U.S. *and* Russia) battle a belligerent China in the near future.
PICTURE» A modern-era *Panzer General II*, only redder
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

SILENT HUNTER II
GENRE» Submarine Simulation
PITCH» Under the seas in a WW II submarine.
PICTURE» *Silent Hunter*
RELEASE DATE» 1999

STEEL PANTHERS IV
GENRE» Wargame
PITCH» The famous series clanks on, this time with a completely new game engine done in Windows 95/98.
PICTURE» War, huh
RELEASE DATE» 1999

SU-27 FLANKER 2.0
GENRE» Flight Simulation
PITCH» One of the best of the hardcore flight sims gets a remake where you again fly the top-of-the-line (for Russia) multi-role fighter.
PICTURE» *Falcon 4.0-ski*
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998/1999

WARHAMMER 40,000: CHAOS GATE
GENRE» Turn-based Strategy
PITCH» Take a squad of Ultramarines on a series of missions against the Chaos Marines in this tactical level game. Previewed in issue 91.
PICTURE» An improved *Soldiers at War* in space
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

WARHAMMER 40,000: RITES OF WAR
GENRE» Turn-based Strategy
PITCH» The "spiritual successor to *Fantasy General*" lets you command *Warhammer 40K* armies in a turn-based game.
PICTURE» Orcs in turn-based space
RELEASE DATE» 1999

STAINLESS STEEL STUDIOS

EMPIRE EARTH
GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PITCH» From Rick Goodman, co-designer of *Age of Empires*, comes this game (which is a working title) where you manage a customizable civilization across 500 millennia of history, all in real time (well, we assume it will run faster than true real time).
PICTURE» *Age of Civilization*
RELEASE DATE» TBD

STARDOCK

STELLAR FRONTIER
GENRE» Action/Role-playing
PITCH» Take your starship to battle against the AI and other humans; as you advance in rank, you'll be able to give orders to lower ranked ships. While there is a single player game, the focus is on online play.
PICTURE» They say, "*Star Control 2* meets *Ultima Online*"
RELEASE DATE» Summer 1998

TALONSOFT

BATTLE OF BRITAIN
GENRE» Wargame
PITCH» Not a flight sim, nor a tactical-scale game like *Achtung! Spitfire*, *Battle of Britain* instead places you in command of the air forces of England or Germany during the famous air battle of WW II.
PICTURE» The operational portion of *Achtung! Spitfire*
RELEASE DATE» November 1998

BATTLEGROUND 9: CHICKAMAUGA
GENRE» Wargame
PITCH» The series that made TalonSoft is back in a limited, direct order-only release with another famous Civil War battle.
PICTURE» The other *Battleground* games with a 32 bit engine
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

BOMBING THE REICH
GENRE» Wargame
PITCH» Take up where *Battle of Britain* left off, and take the air war to Germany. The name is a working title.
PICTURE» *USAAF*, the boardgame *Luftwaffe*
RELEASE DATE» 1999

THE OPERATIONAL ART OF WAR VOLUME II: 1955-2000
GENRE» Wargame
PITCH» Command military forces in operational-scale battles from the '56 Arab-Israeli War up through the Gulf War and into the near-future
PICTURE» *Red Lightning*, *Conflict: Korea* and *Conflict: Middle East* combined and much expanded
RELEASE DATE» Spring 1999

WEST FRONT
GENRE» Wargame
PITCH» Tactical combat on the Western Front during World War II.
PICTURE» *East Front*
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

Warhammer 40,000: Chaos Gate

Fighting Steel

Imperialism 2

West Front

Battle of Britain

Su-27 Flanker 2.0

THQ

BASS MASTERS CLASSIC: TOURNAMENT EDITION

GENRE» Fishing
PITCH» Touted as the only 3D fishing game for the PC, fishing legends Roland Martin, Shaw Grigsby, Ken Cook, and Paul Elias are on hand throughout the game.
PICTURE» All the fun, none of the foul smell
RELEASE DATE» August 1998

BRUNSWICK CIRCUIT PRO BOWLING

GENRE» Bowling
PITCH» Play one of 13 Brunswick bowling professionals in this 3D simulation that touts an advanced physics engine for "unsurpassed realism in ball and pin action."
PICTURE» Beer and pizza
RELEASE DATE» August 1998

INTERNATIONAL RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

GENRE» Racing
PITCH» Rally race around the world, from Sweden to the rain forests of Indonesia. Choose from nine different makes of car, deciding on details such as automatic or manual gear selection to suspension height and tire type. An editor will also let you create your own tracks.
PICTURE» Down and dirty racing
RELEASE DATE» September 1998

SPEEDTRIBES

GENRE» 3D Action
PITCH» Futuristic speed bike riders battle each other in this game set in an alternate reality. Choose one of six gangs, choose your aerocycle and tune it up, then kill people.
PICTURE» Mad Max vs. The Ewoks
RELEASE DATE» October 1998

WCW NITRO

GENRE» Wrestling
PITCH» Compete as one of more than 60 WCW and NOW wrestlers. How you simulate a "sport" that's completely faked is something of a mystery...
PICTURE» Wrestling
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

TOTALLY GAMES

ELDORADO

GENRE» 3D Real-time Strategy/Adventure
PITCH» And now for something completely different. *X-Wing* creator Larry Holland finally puts his anthropology, archeology and history interests to use in a game set in the Age of Exploration. Explore the world in either first-person or an overhead view.
PICTURE» *Seven Cities of Gold 3D*
RELEASE DATE» 1999

UBI SOFT

CHAOS

GENRE» 3D Action/Adventure
PITCH» A working title only, the game posits you as Special Forces Operative Gabriel Cain. Run across landscapes, through buildings and cruise around in vehicles while you try to find your true love Destiny Harper and battle your nemesis Lucifer de Soto. (Where do they get these names?)
PICTURE» We'll get back to you on this one
RELEASE DATE» September 1998

D. JUMP

GENRE» 3D Action/Adventure
PITCH» While no doubt a metaphor for man's role in modern society (or not), suddenly you're turned into a wooden puppet (?) and dumped into an Ancient Egyptian alternative reality. Explore 20 worlds and use your emotions to garner responses from denizens of the environments—some of the modes include stress, groove (??) and love (???). By the way, the name's a working title.
PICTURE» *Pinocchio Raider*
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

F1 RACING 2

GENRE» Racing
PITCH» The sequel to the superlative original tweaks the formula a bit. Take an excellent driving model, add a pinch of simulation, new stats and drivers, and improve on the visual representation of crashes (Ralf Schumacher fans take note) and voila, insta-hit.
PICTURE» The sequel to *F1 Racing Simulation*
RELEASE DATE» November 1998

HYPE - THE TIME QUEST

GENRE» 3D Action/Adventure
PITCH» Run, walk, jump, hitch a ride on a flying dragon and cast magic spells in the first title in the Playmobil Action Games line. You're Hype and you must battle your way through time in order to face off against the evil Black Knight (has there ever been a good black knight?). Meet up with 50 characters, chat with them, exchange phone numbers, then kill them.
PICTURE» Weebles wobble but they don't fall down
RELEASE DATE» October 1998

RAYMAN 2

GENRE» 3D Action/Adventure
PITCH» The lovable limbless hero returns, this time in 3D. The plot has Mr. Rayman escaping an interplanetary zoo using the powers of his fellow prisoners to help him out. For those that care, Mr. Rayman still has no arms.
PICTURE» Here's a stretch—*Rayman*, only 3D
RELEASE DATE» November 1998

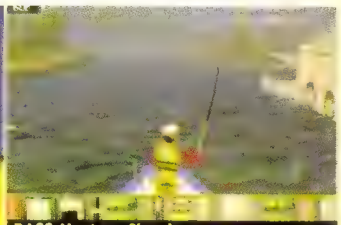
REDLINE RACER

GENRE» Racing
PITCH» This motorcycle game from Criterion Studios supports pretty much every single technology the PC offers, including 3D accelerators, force-feedback, network play and 3D sound.
PICTURE» *Moto Racer*, with more lens flare
RELEASE DATE» August 1998

S.C.A.R.S

GENRE» Vehicular Mayhem
PITCH» Blow stuff up while driving around in a purely arcade racing game (what, you were expecting *F1 Racing 2: This Time It's Personal*?) with nine tracks, real-time lighting, network play, yadda yadda yadda. Oh, and it has *guns*. GUNS.

Tonic Trouble


BASS Masters Classic

Hype - The Time Quest

Speed Busters

Redline Racer

Rayman 2

YOUR OFFICE

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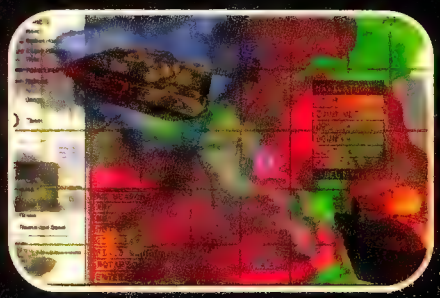

- Choose from 20 action-soaked single missions or the exhilarating desert campaign.
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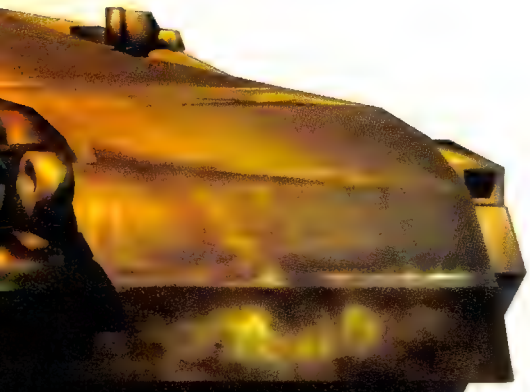
YOUR CO-WORKERS



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Zombie

STAR

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PICTURE» *Wipeout* on the ground
RELEASE DATE» September 1998

SPEED BUSTERS

GENRE» Racing
PITCH» Race five other cars over regular roads while evading Johnny Law. Avoid speed traps and win races in order to earn the cold hard cash that will allow you to buy bigger, better and faster cars. What sets this apart from other games is a realistic damage model.
PICTURE» A gamer's *Need for Carmageddon Speed*
RELEASE DATE» October 1998

TONIC TROUBLE

GENRE» 3D Action/Adventure
PITCH» You're Ed, a staggeringly cute extra-terrestrial that drops a mysterious can that unleashes a series of mutations that affect various flora and fauna in the world. Ed needs to rescue the can from Grogh the Hellish while fighting off killer vegetables and visiting a village of CD worshippers and a desert of upside-down pyramids, all in beautifully realized 3D environments.
PICTURE» *Mario 64* on really great acid
RELEASE DATE» September 1998

VIRGIN INTERACTIVE

DAWN OF WAR

GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PITCH» Visit prehistoric times as you control cavemen, er, cavepeople, in a battle for survival in the world of the Saurian and Neanderthal. Three tribes each have a 10-mission campaign.
PICTURE» *Cro-Magnon & Conquer*
RELEASE DATE» Summer 1998

DUEL: THE MAGE WARS

GENRE» Action/Strategy
PITCH» Developer Mythos (of *X-COM* infamy) places you in a fantasy realm where you'll need to summon mythical creatures (over 21 available) in order to overthrow the Wizard Overlords. The struggle will be waged over three realms: Celtic, Greek, and Medieval.
PICTURE» A Hyperactive Golem spell, or *Diablo-COM*
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

F-16 AGGRESSOR

GENRE» Flight Simulation
PITCH» Players are mercenary pilots who've been hired to take out anti-government rebels all across the continent of Africa in 40 missions (split between four campaigns) ranging from bombing raids to close air support. The enemy won't be restricted to former Soviet hardware, as they'll take to the air in F-15s as well as Su-27s.
PICTURE» *Falcon 4.0 Strike Commander*-style
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

NOX

GENRE» Action/Role-playing
PITCH» You wander through the levels of a castle, beating back hordes of disgustingness armed with little else than spellcasting in an isometric overhead view. Intricate magic possibilities abound as you will be able to "macro" spellcasting tactics.
PICTURE» *Diablo* done by New World's art department
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

RECOIL

GENRE» 3D Action
PITCH» Puzzles and interactive environments will spice up the conventionality of this tank game. Players explore six distinctive worlds, each with four missions; but really, firepower is everything.
PICTURE» A Super-morphing *Battlezone* kind of thing
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

SPORTSCAR

GENRE» Racing
PITCH» This Grand Touring sim features everyday names like BMW, Porsche, and Ford, giving the player the ability to identify with the vehicles in what might very well become the meatloaf of racing games. Meticulously modeled tracks and realistic physics provide the balance between rail-driving and a realistic simulation.
PICTURE» *Need for NASCAR 2*
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

GENRE» Sports
PITCH» In this, the only officially licensed Superbike game, gamers will experience all 12 official racing circuits, such as Laguna Seca in California, Donington in the United Kingdom, and Phillip Island in Australia. Tracks will be recreated faithfully, with topographical and geometric data taken into consideration; up to 30 players can race in multiplayer.
PICTURE» *Need for SuperBikes*
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

SWORDS & SORCERY: COME DEVILS, COME DARKNESS

GENRE» Role-playing
PITCH» Lead your party to the Oracles of Ishad N'ha on your way to confront and defeat the Lord of Death, Cet Ude D'ua Khan (what were his parents thinking?) in a 3D fantasy medieval setting. The buzzphrase here is "adaptive time phasing," a somewhat different approach to the real-time vs. turn based dilemma. Previewed in Issue 91
PICTURE» *Might and Magic* on prom night
RELEASE DATE» Winter 1998

WESTWOOD STUDIOS

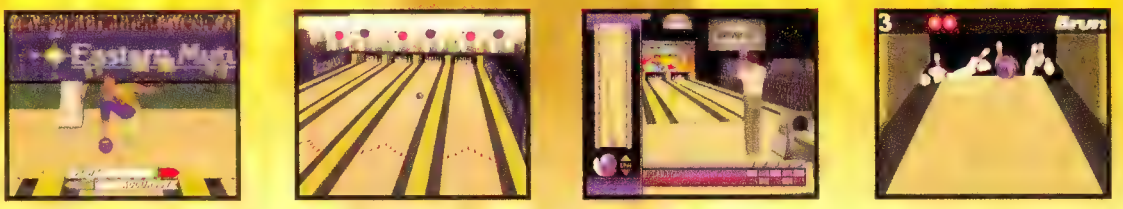
DUNE 2000

GENRE» Real-time Strategy
PITCH» *Dune II* fans wanted an update, and this is what they get; basically *Dune II* redone with a new engine, a few new features, and multiplayer. Previewed in issue 90.
PICTURE» *Dune II* meets *Red Alert* in a David Lynch movie
RELEASE DATE» Summer 1998

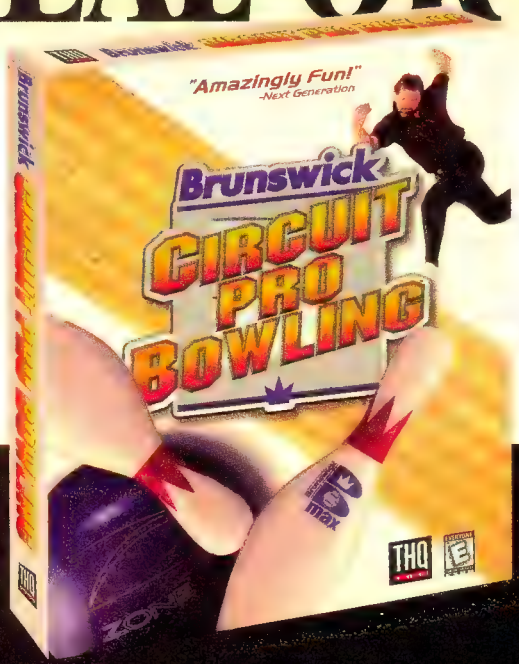
LANDS OF LORE III

GENRE» Role-playing
PITCH» Portals have opened into Gladstone and trouble flows from them; it's your job to visit the five areas accessible through the portals to rescue your world. Previewed in issue 91.
PICTURE» *Lands of Lore II* fixed and expanded
RELEASE DATE» Fall 1998

You're in the 10th frame,
there's a bucket of sweat
dripping off your brow
and this shot is worth
way too much money



IS IT REAL OR IS IT...



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>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>> RAISING KANE

by Benjamin E. Sones

The untold story of Command & Conquer: Tiberian Sun

COMMAND & CONQUER

TIBERIAN SUN

WESTWOOD STUDIOS

Hover MRLS | The Scrin Fighter

A wide variety of opinions exist regarding the nature of real-time strategy games. Do they represent a genre unto themselves? Are they merely a sub-classification of other strategy games? Or are they perhaps best described as a hybrid of action and strategy? Questions regarding what real-time strategy is and where it is (or should be) going may be open to debate, but the question of where it came from has a clear answer. With its 1992 release of *Dune II*, Westwood Studios defined the basic elements behind the entire real-time strategy trend. In 1995 they helped carry real-time strategy into the mainstream with their gritty depiction of near-future conflict in *Command & Conquer*. Since then their contributions to the trend they created have been in the form of add-ons and missions packs that have made only minor alterations to their basic formula for gameplay. Far from resting on their laurels, however, Westwood has been toiling on a sequel that they hope will move their real-time prodigal son to the next level. Now they are nearly ready to unveil the sequel to *Command & Conquer*, and fans will finally learn what fate the world has come to under a Tiberian Sun...

What's your story, soldier?

The story picks up where the first game left off, plus or minus thirty or forty years. Two separate endings were possible in *Command & Conquer*, depending on the side of the fence the player chose to sit on, but the story behind *Tiberian Sun* assumes that GDI (the Global Defense Initiative) defeated the Brotherhood of Nod and eliminated their mysterious leader, Kane. Fractionalized and without direction, the Brotherhood quickly faded from the forefront of world affairs and vanished into the underground.

The thrill of victory was a short-lived one for GDI

This mech has received a facelift since its debut

Some of the buildings in neutral cities can be used by both Nod and GDI forces... they blow up real nice, too

Nod's Obelisk and GDI's Ion Cannon are some of the most deadly weapons in the game... sit back and enjoy the carnage

forces, however, as a new and more ominous opponent materialized to threaten the safety of the planet... Tiberium. The very substance that funded and drove the original war proved to be that war's only true victor. Heedless of the warnings that Tiberium might have dangerous and unpredictable properties, GDI made little effort to contain the strange crystalline substance as it continued to spread across the face of the planet. Their idleness sealed a dark fate for the world they had fought to save from Kane's dark designs; as the Tiberium multiplied it quickly became evident that it was more than just dangerous. In the space of a few decades it transformed much of the Earth's biosphere into a wasteland and killed most of the human population of the planet. The people that died from Tiberium poisoning were the lucky ones; others were mutated into hideous berzerker creatures that were barely recognizable as human. Only the coldest and most arid regions of the planet proved resistant to the spread of the deadly resource, and as civilization crumbled around them, GDI began relocating the remaining survivors to the relatively safe confines of the Arctic Circle.

With the world's economy failing and much of the surviving populace looking to them for guidance, GDI found itself running out of options. Finding little success in stopping (let alone reversing) the spread of Tiberium, GDI was forced to devise a desperate plan to move the remaining population of Earth off the planet as a last-ditch effort to save humanity. The GDI side of the story in *Tiberian Sun* opens on the Philadelphia, one of several orbital space stations on which GDI's military intelligence and the civilian elite are already residing.

The return of a leader

Nod has not fared much better than GDI in this Tiberium-ravaged world. Separated into opposing factions and hampered by in fighting, Nod has retreated into the deep desert to escape the worst effects of the planet's toxic biosphere. Under the weak leadership of a new character, Hassan, the Brotherhood posed little threat to anyone other than itself. Fortunately for players who have dictatorial bent, Hassan's days as a Nod figurehead are limited. In spite of the fact that he stood on ground zero of an Ion blast at the conclusion of the GDI story in *Command & Conquer*, Kane is still alive. Spirited from the ruins of the Temple of Nod to a safe area by his loyal commandos, Kane started work on masterminding his own public resurrection as leader of the Brotherhood. In his typical diabolical way, Kane has used the effects of Tiberium for his own purposes, mutating humans with genetic and chemical "enhancements" to create a new breed of elite soldiers that sport superhuman abilities and resistance to Tiberium poisoning. The Nod side of the story opens with a full-blown civil war in the Brotherhood, as Kane moves to overthrow Hassan's puppet government.

While GDI strives to save the planet from the threat of Tiberium, Kane elects to take a different path. Confident in his belief that the planet should not be saved, Kane engineers his own plans to embrace the effects of Tiberium. He believes that the mutations the crystals engender represent the next step in the evolution of the human race (though many of his human test subjects are not quite as enthusiastic). Once again the forces of Nod are set against those of GDI—this time for much higher stakes.

Heedless of the warnings that Tiberium might have dangerous and unpredictable properties, GDI made little effort to contain the strange crystalline substance as it continued to spread across the face of the planet. Their idleness sealed a dark fate for the world they had fought to save from Kane's dark designs...

GDI's massive Disrupter tank

MOVING UP IN THE WORLD

One of the new building features in the game is the upgrade system, which will allow players to add new elements to existing buildings. Building space will be at a higher premium in *Tiberian Sun,* according to lead designer Erik Yeo. Players will want to wall off their bases as soon as possible in any given mission—partly to thwart enemy attack, but also to keep the rapidly growing Tiberium fields from infesting their turf. Upgrades allow the player to add new abilities to existing structures, and they require no extra space to build. Each structure that supports upgrades has a set number of "sockets" into which upgrades can be placed. Most structures will have more available upgrades than sockets, forcing the player to choose carefully which upgrades to build. In addition to making structures more space-friendly, upgrades add an element of non-linearity to the game's building progression. "We did not want there to be one set order in which the player builds a base," explains Yeo. The upgrade system allows the player to branch off in different directions, depending on the tactical requirements of a given mission. The GDI Com Center (pictured above) has two upgrade sockets, located in front of the main building. As of this writing, three different upgrades are available for the Comm Center. The Threat Assessment Targeter improves the AI of your base defense by calculating and comparing the relative threat levels of attacking units and orchestrating your defensive units and structures accordingly. The Ion Control Center gives the player the ability to order Ion Cannon shots at the enemy, and the Hunter Seeker Control Center allows the player to send out Hunter Seeker drones.

Hunter Seekers wander the battlefield of their own volition, seeking out the nearest enemy unit. The unit is very small, and they can be very difficult to spot unless you are specifically looking for them. Once they have found an enemy unit they will attach to it, allowing the player to see anything that enemy unit sees. When the controlling player grows tired of this, he can order the Hunter Seeker to self-destruct, taking the unit it is attached to and any close bystanders with it. ■

Downtrodden, but not Forgotten

Caught in the middle of the struggle are the last remnants of the free people of Earth. Mutated and still inhabiting the infected regions of the planet are a faction of people called the Forgotten. Hunted by Nod to supply bodies for Kane's hideous experiments and all but ignored by the overworked forces of GDI, the Forgotten are the neglected untouchables of the modern world. They know what dark fate awaits them, as Tiberium continues to carry them further and further down the path of mutation and into insanity, but they haven't lost their pride or their will to live. How the player reacts to the Forgotten, as either Nod or GDI, will have some effect on how the story unfolds.

War of the Worlds

So far everything is pretty straightforward, in a Machiavellian sort of way, but the strange Tiberium crystals have one final dark secret to reveal. Far from representing a random force for destruction in the game world, Tiberium came to Earth with its own agenda. Sent by an unknown alien race, the powerful "resource" is actually a sophisticated terraforming agent designed to alter our planet's environment to make it more suitable for alien habitation. It is a story twist that throws the entire conflict into a whole new perspective, and as events in the game unfold, both GDI and Nod may find that they are both in way over their heads…

All the world's a stage

Westwood has made an effort to make the story a more significant gameplay factor in *Tiberian Sun,* and a quick look at the premise of the game suggests that they will have a lot of material to work with.

One of the major changes will be the method in which the game presents the story to the player. Gone are the "talking head" briefings of the first game; the player is now represented by a third-person persona (one of two possible characters, depending on which side the player takes) in the game. Cut scenes will feature the story unfolding around the player's persona in a fashion reminiscent of Origin's *Wing Commander* games. In addition to this, story elements will also be presented during the missions themselves, in the form of context-sensitive video trailers that run in the sidebar when triggered by certain events or by actions performed by the player. These in-game videos will offer the player information and tactical options, and possibly even alter the player's mission objectives on the fly.

Branching missions will still be a feature of the single-player campaign, but Westwood hopes to make them play a greater role than they did in the original *Command & Conquer.* The player will be offered choices more often, and those choices will be more closely integrated into the flow of the game. A player might, in the middle of a mission, discover a train that takes them to an entirely new mission map where they will have new objectives to accomplish. After they have accomplished those objectives, they might return to the map that they started from and find that the nature of their original mission has changed.

Neutral factions will also play an important role in *Tiberian Sun,* both in terms of story and gameplay. The Forgotten trust nobody when the story opens, but depending on your actions in the game, it may be possible for either GDI or Nod to win them over as allies (GDI has a greater chance of doing so, as the Forgottens' hatred of the Brotherhood runs deep). Forging an alliance with the Forgotten has its benefits, as they might be

Stunning architecture, massive explosions, 30-foot tall walking war machines- it could be downtown Los Angeles... well, except for the stunning architecture

These Nod troops are about to get a dunking courtesy of the flotilla of GDI Hover MRLSs under the bridge... the Hover MRLS is a weakly armored unit that packs powerful long-range missiles and can traverse any terrain

"When Bridges Collapse"... a Nod tank is about to have several hundred tons of bridge dumped in its lap

Nod forces launch a subterranean attack on a GDI base... note that the gate in the base wall will open when friendly units touch it, and stay open just long enough for a canny opponent to sneak a Stealth Tank through...

willing to lend the player powerful units that can not normally be built by either GDI or Nod.

The mysterious alien presence is another wildcard *Tiberian Sun* has to offer. Aside from the obvious impact of their plan to terraform the Earth, both GDI and Nod will have the opportunity within the game to uncover and use alien technology to build advanced and futuristic units. When asked whether the alien race would remain in the shadows or play an active role in the game, lead producer Donny Miele responded: "the extent of the alien presence starts with Tiberium and unfolds from there; how far out we go with that, you'll see as you are playing the game…."

The nuts and bolts

The game engine has been rebuilt from the ground up for *Tiberian Sun,* and promises a number of new innovations such as 3D voxel-based units, dynamic colored lighting, and 3D deformable terrain. The terrain is still tile-based, but the tiles can occupy any of 15 different levels of elevation. Interesting features such as tunnels and bridges (that units can travel over and under, and that can be both destroyed and repaired) populate the landscape. Explosions create actual craters in the earth, and units can deform terrain in ways that can be used tactically. Faced with an impassable cliff, a Mammoth Tank might choose to use its firepower to whittle the precipice down into a useable ramp.

Westwood also hopes to make the game environment more dynamic and interactive. Everything on the map for a given mission can be interacted with in some way—trees can be set aflame to trigger forest fires, ice can be shot out from under an enemy unit as it attempts to cross a frozen river, etc. Mutant animals wander the maps and might attack units, or players might try to use these animals for their own ends (a stampede of mutant cattle might be herded into an enemy formation, for instance). In addition to neutral factions such as the Forgotten, neutral buildings and even entire cities will dot the battlefields. While neutral buildings can not be owned by either Nod or GDI, some of them can be used by either. Hospitals, for instance, will heal any unit that visits them. All of the buildings can, of course, be destroyed.

There will also be a number of "weather" effects that add an element of random chaos to the game, similar to the sandworms in *Dune II.* Meteor strikes can cause massive amounts of damage to units and structures,

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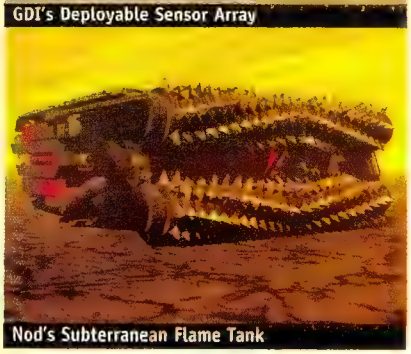
Nod's Tiberium-mutated Cyborg Infantry

FIGHT SMARTER, NOT HARDER

Tiberian Sun will introduce an experience system that will apply to every unit in the game. As units progress in experience, they advance through three different levels of experience—Green, Veteran, and Commander—that are denoted by a small icon that appears beneath the unit when it is selected. As units progress, they gain higher levels of hit points and armor and cause more damage when they attack. Some units gain additional abilities or smarter AI at given experience levels (the specific abilities are subject to change, based on game balance). For example, GDI's Light Battle Infantry gains the ability to direct other units around it (commanding them to automatically scatter during an air strike, for instance). An experienced Nod Stealth Tank will automatically employ tricky tactics when it attacks: it will de-cloak, fire, re-cloak, and then move to a new position to avoid a counter-strike. GDI's Jump Jet Infantry can attack from both the land and air, but once they become veterans they will be able to assess the best way to fight a given target. If that target lacks anti-air weapons, the Jump Jet Infantry will launch and attack it from the air; if the target has strong anti-air capabilities, however, they will restrict their fighting to the ground. ■

While still a valuable resource, Tiberium is hazardous and spreads quickly... the smart player will erect walls early on to keep it out of their base

GDI's Deployable Sensor Array



Nod's Subterranean Flame Tank

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>> The multiplayer game has received some polish as well, and the interface is no longer a separate program but is integrated into the main game menu. A number of handicapping options such as "Harvester Truce" (makes all players' Harvesters immune to attack) will allow players to help balance games between newbies and veterans. Also shipping with the game will be a random map generator—similar to the one from _Civilization II_—which will allow players to generate maps based on set criteria or completely at random.

and spawn new Tiberium fields around the crater where the meteor hits. Deadly ion storms (which can last for minutes) rain powerful bolts of lightning down on the map and render units that employ advanced technology (stealth units, for instance) ineffective.

When units explode, they shower the immediate area with pieces of debris, each of which is actually a 3D object that can potentially cause damage to anything it happens to hit. This debris remains on the battlefield where the Scavenger (one of the neutral units that can be gained only through an alliance) can find it. The Scavenger pieces together debris he finds on the battlefield into new units whose abilities are an amalgam of the parts used to construct them.

While the interface has been cleaned up and some new features added, Westwood is committed to maintaining the basic simplicity of control from the original _Command & Conquer_. The game does feature a new waypoint system that allows players to save a series of waypoints and reuse it with different groups of units (they can also be looped to form persistent patrol paths). To help make power management easier, buildings can now be turned on and off at the player's discretion. There are no plans currently to employ building queues or to allow players to issue orders with the game paused. "That just isn't the _Command & Conquer_ metaphor," explains lead designer Erik Yeo. He goes on to explain that these features could easily be added if the team decides that they would add significantly to the game.

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The real-time strategy arms race

Perhaps the largest obstacle that Westwood has to face with _Tiberian Sun_ lies not in the implementation of features, but in their attempt to once again carry the standard of a genre that may have passed the level of complete market saturation. Many of the advances in real-time strategy games to date have been incremental rather than revolutionary, and the question of the direction fans would like to see the genre take has yet to be answered. Westwood has been making real-time strategy games longer than just about anyone else, and the _Tiberian Sun_ team has very specific ideas regarding what they consider the strengths and weaknesses of the genre to be. Associate producer Rade Stojsavljevic sums it up well: "You look at the way it used to be–everything used to be so complicated, there used to be so many things in [strategy games]. Then when _Dune II_ came out it was a breath of fresh air because it was really simple to play. It was hard to become an expert at it, but it was really simple to jump into and have a lot of fun. We expanded on that in _Command & Conquer_ and _Red Alert_, and we have done that again in [_Tiberian Sun_]. A lot of the other games now seem to be going full circle and going back and adding more of the complexity that made it so hard to get into the real time strategy-type of game in the first place. What we have done, we have extended the _C&C_ style of gameplay; in which it's really simple—you just hop in and play. There is a lot more depth there—a lot of [depth] we have made transparent to the user."

Fans can decide for themselves whether Westwood has succeeded when the game ships in October. ■

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HARDWARE

While they lacked the 10 story video screens and the leather-clad dominatrix that the software giants employed to garner attention, most of the PC hardware companies were also strutting their stuff at the E3 show. The battle among the manufacturers of 3D cards and game controllers is particularly heated, as each claims their (3D accelerator, gamepad, joystick, steering wheel, etc.) is superior to the competition because it boasts more (polygons, filtering options, buttons, switches, force feedback, biofeedback). The following is a sampling of the hardware that was pitched at the show.

ACT Labs PoweRamp Arcade Stick

ACT Labs RS Wheel

ACT Labs Eagle Max

Getting a grip on 3D cards and joysticks

3DFX No, they don't make retail boards, but they do provide the technology that drives the leading 3D accelerators. What's next for the San Jose, Calif. company that owes its fortunes to the success of *GLQuake*? Screaming souls of dead Celts, that's what.

Er, that is, the Voodoo Banshee. See, a Banshee is a Celtic spirit that... oh, never mind. What's important is that Voodoo Banshee marks 3Dfx's return to the 2D/3D combo card, for the first time since the less-than-rapturously-received Voodoo Rush. This time, the 3D technology is Voodoo2-level, the 2D core is an in-house design (the Rush's was developed by a third party), and the goal is uncompromising 2D and 3D performance.

While cards based on the Banshee chipset should filter into the retail channel this fall, 3Dfx is already making some impressive claims about performance. Available in PCI or AGP versions, Banshee cards are geared towards gamers who want a powerful all-in-one graphics solution but don't want to give up Voodoo compatibility. How is 3Dfx going to avoid the problems experienced by early adopters of the Rush? This time around, they'll be using pure Voodoo2 technology, and the Banshee will simply be somewhat less powerful because it will lack some of the standalone card's multi-processing capability. For 2D, 3Dfx is claiming near "null driver" performance (i.e., the performance of Windows in an environment where all the interface operations are handled in hardware, without drivers); their own testing claims significant advantages for Banshee over RIVA 128, Matrox G200, and other chipsets in 2D performance.

As for 3D action, the company claims that Banshee cards will perform better than Voodoo cards and just slightly less stupendously than the top of the line Voodoo2 boards. Available in 4, 8, and 16MB versions, Banshee cards will be sold by card makers as yet unnamed—expect the usual suspects. Prices should range from the mid-$100s to close to $300 for a fully-loaded, 16MB AGP card with TV-out and all the trimmings.

CH Gamestick

CH Racing Wheel

ACT LABS

If you play a lot of arcade games on your PC, the PowerRamp Arcade Stick may be worth some desk space. This controller provides an arcade-like short throw joystick with 14 programmable buttons, all on a heavy metal base (there was a lot of heavy metal bass playing on the floor of the E3, but... oh, never mind). The Eagle Max competes for the title of "most programmable buttons on a joystick", with 18 functions, including an eight way hat switch, a two way rocker switch, and a rotary throttle controller. Act Labs were also showing their steering wheels: the RS is a solid wheel, with programmable buttons, F1 style shift levers, and gas and brake pedals on an oversized base. The Force RS adds I-Force force feedback.

CH PRODUCTS

This veteran PC hardware manufacturer was showing off their two new steering wheels, the CH Racing System and the CH Racing Wheel. The former consists of a steering wheel with a 160 degree range-of-motion turning ability, four push buttons on the wheel, a two mode selector to help avoid game incompatibilities, and a set of brake and gas pedals. The latter is the same wheel sans pedals, for those who only wish to be slightly fanatic about their racing games.

While known for their flight sim joysticks, CH is also unveiling sticks aimed at the broader game market. The Gamestick is a joystick for the casual gamer, with the standard four buttons and a slide throttle. The Gamestick 14 adds more buttons and two directional control pads for a total of 14 functions. Both sticks are programmable. The imaginatively named

Joystick SwitchBox is a "smart" four port adapter that allows a gamer to plug in up to four peripherals at once, and then will automatically switch to the active device. All of these have been covered in past issues, and are all worth a look.

CYBERSTUFF

The Cyberstik is a slick little joystick with a difference: it is wireless and hand held, with no attachment to a base. It was reviewed in issue 90. CyberStuff was also showing the CyberArcade TV, a joint venture between CyberStuff and Focus Enhancements Inc., which allows users to hook up their PCs to a television and maintain near monitor resolution. An external box is utilized rather than an internal card. The showing at E3 seemed to bear out their claims regarding a high-quality display.

GRAVIS

The featured product at the Gravis booth was their new digital Xterminator gamepad: it's another of the steroid injected "do it all" pads. 17 programmable controls, analog-like control pad, regular D-pad, six primary buttons with two digital triggers, throttle, two analog flipper switches and an eight way hat. Reviewed in issue 92, it's well-worth checking out.

GUILLEMOT

Not a household word in the US, Guillemot International has nevertheless been supplying multimedia gear to computer users for some time now. Their line of Voodoo cards offers cost-effective acceleration solutions, and the company is now expanding its offerings to include some of the newer 3D chipsets. The Maxi Gamer 3D2 is an 8MB or 12 MB Voodoo2 card, with the usual specs (3 64-bit processors, 192-bit memory architecture, 2.2GB memory bandwidth) running off a 90Mhz system clock. The 8MB version will sell for $229, the 12MB for $259. For an integrated 2D/3D solution, on the other hand, Guillemot offers the Maxi Gamer 2D/3D AGP board, which uses the Intel i740 chipset. Optimized for AGP 2X's 528MB/second bandwidth, the card comes with 4MB of 100Mhz SGRAM and should support resolutions up to 1280 by 1024 at 16-bit color. It will ship with OpenGL and DirectX optimized drivers; no pricing info yet, but expect it to be competitive with similar boards.

Not content to push only video cards, Guillemot will also be offering a slew of PC game controllers. The T-

Microsoft Digital Sound System 80

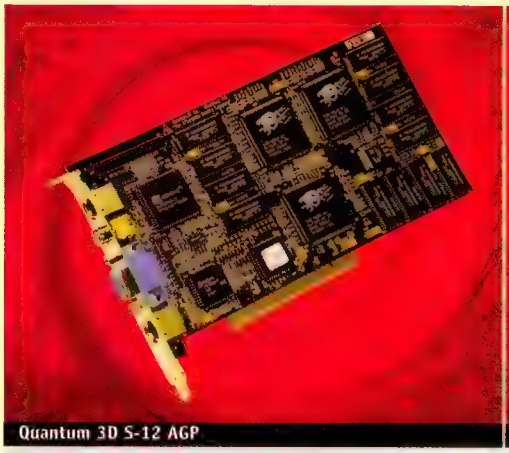
Microsoft Sidewinder Force Feedback Wheel

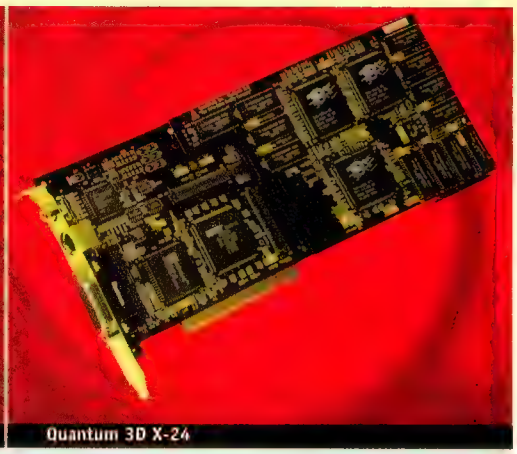
MICROSOFT

No longer limited to mice, the software giant is continuing to branch out into other realms of PC hardware. Already successful with its line of joysticks and gamepads, Microsoft has two new products in the works, a force-feedback steering wheel and a digital speaker system.

The SideWinder Force Feedback Wheel will ship with full versions of *CART Precision Racing* and *Monster Truck Madness 2* and features slip-resistant pedals and eight programmable buttons, including two F1-style shifter triggers. Force-feedback effects can be turned on and off as well, and a simple but sturdy quick-release cam-lock system attaches the wheel to any flat surface. The wheel itself is solid, thick, and smallish, very much like real racing wheels; it feels quite comfortable in the hands. How well it works with a wide range of products remains to be seen, but with *Monster Truck Madness 2* at least it does a creditable job.

The Digital Sound System 80 is Microsoft's first speaker system. Developed with audio-gear veteran Phillips, the satellite and subwoofer system boasts 76 watts of total power and several innovative features, such as full USB support, a 10-band software graphic equalizer, and digital and analog sound inputs. Using USB, the speakers will not need a sound card at all, instead reading digital sound data directly from the source, whether CDs, DVDs, or the Internet. Microsoft Surround Sound support is built in, which is supposed to produce a more life-like surround sound experience without additional hardware. It sounded pretty wonderful in a controlled environment compared to a Bose system Microsoft representatives selected—we'll reserve our final judgment until we get to hear it against our own speakers in our own listening environment.


Quantum 3D S-12 AGP


Quantum 3D X-24

QUANTUM 3D

You may not have heard of them, but these folks know 3D. They make the Obsidian cards that power many arcade coin-op systems, and now they're making Obsidian2 boards, with 3Dfx Voodoo2 chipsets, for the home market. There are several different models to choose from, including three 12MB boards (the S-12, S-12 AGP, and S-12 AGP TV), a 16MB board (the X-16) and a humongous 24MB offering, the X-24. All are PCI boards, except the S-12 AGP models, and most include TV out. All the boards use the standard 196-bit memory architecture (382-bit on the X series), for graphics memory bandwidths of 2.2GB or 4.4GB/second.

What makes the high-end Obsidian2 boards stand out, though, is their ability to offer Scan Line Interleaved (SLI) performance using only a single accelerator card. Normally, SLI (which allows Voodoo2 boards to offer resolutions of up to 1024 by 768) requires two accelerator cards in two separate PCI slots. With the X-16 and X-24, each board contains two 3Dfx graphics subsystems and can perform SLI with one board in one slot. Quantum3D claims the X-24 can deliver over 80 frames per second at 1024 by 768 running Quake II. All of this performance comes at a price, though. The top of the line X-24 weighs in at $699; the cheapest card, the S-12, retails for $329.

Leader 3D gamepad (that's *el joypad ergonómico* in Spanish, by the way) is an N64-style controller with a built-in joystick. The Sphere Pad 3D is a sort of Space Orb clone, with a ball to twist hither and yon for movement in three dimensions. The Race Leader 3D is a standard F1-style wheel and pedal setup, while the Jet Leader 3D (see a pattern here, kemosabe?) is a combo digital/analog joystick with the usual array of programmable buttons, hats, and throttles. Finally, there's the Turbo Player PC digital gamepad and the Megamouse Senior (*el ratón de 3 botones*), a three-button mouse available in funky blue or snazzy red.

LOGITECH

Logitech has jumped into the force feedback milieu with the WingMan Force. This joystick's advance electronics allow it to run cool enough to eliminate the need for a cooling fan, and provides a button rich environment, with 10 programmable buttons, an eight way hat switch, and a throttle wheel. The WingMan Force also supports both USB and a standard serial interface.

MAD CATZ

The Panther XL is aimed at the first-person action shooter crowd (*Quake*, *Unreal*, etc.): it's a combines a joystick (four buttons, two four way hat switches) and a trackball (five buttons). Also on board is a throttle and a port for attaching a rudder. The Panther LS is a digital flightstick with 17 programmable buttons, two hat switches, a throttle and a port for rudder peddles. And Mad Catz makes their play in the steering wheel arena with the Andretti Racing Wheel, boasting six digital buttons, F1 shifters on the wheel, a stick shift and gas and brake pedals.

MATROX

A perennial player in the video card marketplace, Matrox has been aggressive in pursuing the 3D enthusiast. This year's top draw is the Mystique G200, using the MGA-G200 chipset. The 3D-only card will sell for $169 for the 8MB version, or $218 for the 16MB variety, and will offer resolutions up to 1280x1024 in 16-bit color. Supporting triple-buffering, alpha blending, tri-linear filtering, and a 32-bit Z-buffer, Matrox claims the new 16MB Mystique will deliver over 30 fps at 1280x1024 for Direct3D games like Activision's *Battlezone*. The card, which will also support OpenGL and AGP 2X, should be available by this fall.

NEC POWER VR

An also-ran in the first round of battles against the 3Dfx juggernaut, NEC's PowerVR technology is gearing up for a rematch, and this time they're banking on some high-tech knockout punches to stick a few pins in Voodoo's butt. While they won't be vending any hardware per se, NEC and VideoLogic will be making the basic chipsets for a new generation of 3D accelerators that will be marketed by traditional video card makers. Called, unimaginatively, Power VR Second-Generation Technology, this new approach uses a pixel, or tile-based engine to render 3D scenes, rather than traditional polygon-based systems. Because the card only has to render what is actually seen on the screen (it does something called On-Chip Hidden Surface Removal), it doesn't need any z-buffer memory, for storing the data on those invisible elements. NEC is claiming up to three million polygons per second, and features like bump-mapping (which enhances the 3D-effect of perturbations on a flat surface), fog, and other effects. Maximum performance should be in the range of 1600 by 1200 at 24-bit color depth

When Second Generation PowerVR cards are available, at the end of the summer, they should be shipping as 2D/3D single-card solutions as well as stand-alone 3D accelerators; because the technology uses system as well as on-board texture RAM, expect prices to be very attractive in comparison to most stand-alone accelerators due to the need for less high-cost memory on each card. NEC has already lined up a group of games that will support the technology, including Activision's *SiN* and *Heavy Gear 2*, EA's *Moto Racer 2*, and Eidos' *Daikatana* and *Final Fantasy VII*. Also supported will be GT Interactive's *Unreal*, Acclaim's *Forsaken*, and Activision's *Quake II*, among many others.

QUICKSHOT

Quickshot's GenX series of joysticks include the 700K and 700P: both offer eight buttons, a rotational handle for rudder control, a multiview hat switch, and throttle. The primary difference is in the programming mode: the 700K can be switched between standard analog and keyboard digital modes, while the 700P is configured via a mode utilizing its game port connection. The 500 is a stripped down model, with four buttons and no programming capabilities. The 500L is a mirror image of the 500, specifically aimed at left handers.

SAITEK

Saitek has thrown their hat into the PC steering wheel ring with two offerings. The R4 Racing Wheel features two wheel mounted buttons, an option to switch between a gear stick and shift paddles, and the ability to adjust the resistance of both the steering wheel and the gas and brake pedals. The R4 Force Wheel adds (can you guess?) force feedback.

The keyword for Saitek's Cyborg 3D joystick is adjustability. In addition to 24 programmable functions, including four on-stick buttons, an eight way hat switch, four base buttons, two base mounted shift buttons, and a twisting stick action, the user may adjust the stick for thumb length, thumb angle, and hand size, as well as switching the throttle control for southpaws.

The Cyborg 3D gamepad has all of the features one would expect from the current crop of "superpads" and then some: four triggers, six fire buttons, a rotary throttle and rudder/steering control, an eight way directional thumb pad and a mini-joystick. All together, 26 programmable actions (and a bottle of Ginkgo Biloba to help you remember them all).

SGRL

SGRL was showing their Titans Sphere game controller, a very "different" looking piece of hardware that is held with two hands and includes two directional handles, four user programmable buttons, a rudder and a throttle. It looks and feels as if the user is holding the axle of a small wheel in his hands, unattached to a base, which responds to the up, down, left, right, forward and backward movement of the hands.

STB

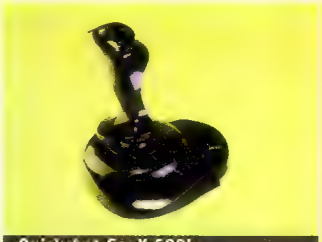
A popular manufacturer of OEM cards (the ones you get bundled with a system from direct retailers, for instance), STB is continuing its relationship with NVIDIA and the RIVA line of chipsets. The most exciting product on the horizon is the Velocity 4400, using the RIVA TNT architecture. Called TNT because of its "TwiN Texel" design, the new card will supposedly offer a 250 mega-pixels-per-second (say that three times fast) fill rate, 8 million polys a second, and a full 128MB memory interface. Like earlier Velocity cards, the TNT will be a 2D/3D solution, and will support Direct3D and OpenGL. It's 250MHz RAMDAC and 200Hz max refresh rate promise high-resolution true-color (32-bit) capability at resolutions up to 1900x1280. The TNT will also have TV out ports on both the AGP and PCI versions, and will ship with either 8MB or 16MB of SDRAM or SGRAM. Expect a price of around $300 when it ships later this year.

Also available from STB are the Velocity 128 with the RIVA ZX chipset, an 8MB 2D/3D card that's an evolution of the popular original Velocity. The ZX card sports a 250MHz RAMDAC, and supports resolutions up to 1600x1200 at up to 160Hz. It's available in AGP 2X or PCI versions. And for those who really have to have Voodoo or nothing, the Black Magic 3D Voodoo2 ships with 8MB or 12MB of EDO DRAM, and supports resolutions up to 800x600 with GLide or Direct3D titles. It's a 3D-only card, and it's available now.

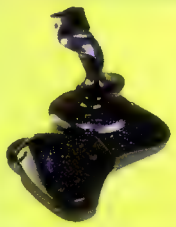
SUNCOM

Suncom's new Strike Series Throttle is unique in it's split throttle configuration, allowing separate control, for example, of each engine in a twin engine fighter sim. All of the buttons on the throttle can be programmed, even while in the middle of a game, thanks to Suncom's "Touch 'N Go" programming interface—push the program switch, hold down the button to be programmed, then type in the desired key(s)—and the buttons of any joystick plugged into the Strike Series Throttle can also be programmed. The extra throttle control of a split throttle such as the Strike Series Throttle comes at a price: rudder pedals can not be used simultaneously. Suncom states that USB will provide the functionality to get around this problem (although the Strike Series Throttle is not USB functional). The Strike Fighter Series Fighter Controller is a companion joystick to the Strike Series Throttle, with four buttons and a four way hat switch.

Utilizing the same programming system of their throttle, Suncom's SFX Plus gamepad provides 24 programmable buttons. And since your desktop is going to be so cluttered up with all of these gamepads, joysticks, throttles, and steering wheels, you may be interested in Suncom's Atom Mouse: a tiny mouse attached to a 3.5" by 3.5" base. Use of an optical code bar allows the small travel area to provide complete coverage.



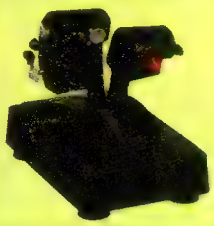
Quickshot GenX 500L



Quickshot GenX 700

SGRL Titans Sphere

Saitek Cyborg 3D Joystick



Suncom Strike Series Throttle

Suncom SFX Plus Gamepad

THRUSTMASTER

The original hard-core flight controller manufacturer, was showing a couple of newer sticks that expand their line. The Top Gun Platinum joystick expands the design of the Top Gun, adding a broader base, improved gimbal design, and a throttle wheel (which can be configured for use as a rudder) to Thrustmaster's stick for the users who don't feel the need for their more sophisticated (and expensive) sticks. For computer pilots seeking one-stop shopping, a "Thrustmaster Flight System" package is offered, consisting of a Top Gun joystick, an Attack throttle, and the Elite rudder pedals. The Revolution is a departure in the joystick line for Thrustmaster: a joystick with a radically sleek look, boasting eight programmable buttons, a four way hat switch, pitch, roll and yaw throttle inputs and the ability to connect via USB or traditional 15 pin connectors.

Thrustmaster has also decided to produce a wide range of steering wheels. The NASCAR Sprint is a wheel with four buttons and gas and brake pedals. The NASCAR Super Sport is a high quality wheel with paddle shifters and dual tension gas and brake pedals. The NASCAR Pro Digital adds USB capability to Thrustmaster's popular NASCAR Pro steering wheel system. And, for those who feel you just can't offer too many PC steering wheels, the NASCAR Force GT is Thrustmaster's offering in the Force Feedback category.

Additionally, for those more into sports and action games, Thrustmaster is offering a new gamepad, the Rage USB+, with USB support, a new ergonomic design, and 10 programmable buttons; and an interesting, two handed joystick that was only in prototype form at E3, the Fist Fighter (insert joke here), a "two handed 'shooter' game controller" designed specifically for first person action games in the *Quake* mold, claiming better response than the traditional "mouse + keyboard" arrangement more commonly found in these games.

The Operational Art of War

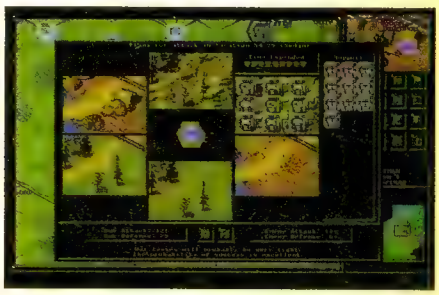
Norm Koger delivers a step forward in computer wargaming

Norm Koger's *The Operational Art of War, Vol I: 1939-1955* , is a die-hard wargamer's delight. It's not for everyone—he has crafted a wargame that leans towards complexity in the engine and execution while skimping on graphics and effects. Considering the depth and magnitude of the simulation, however, this is a minor point. Focused at the operational level of war, which is between strategy (the use of national power to obtain long term goals) and tactics (the maneuver of units on the battlefield), it examines the linking of engagements into battles to accomplish strategic goals. The depth and complexity of the game will not be for everyone, but those hard core gamers who are willing to immerse themselves will be richly rewarded.

Perhaps learning from the lessons of their recent *East Front* experience, publisher TalonSoft includes a detailed manual with the game, one with complete unit listings by type and values—in effect, an acknowledgment of *grognards'* demand for information. The section on the editor sports formulas for determining such things as permitted equipment density, overstacking penalties, and combat strength determination. A step-by-step tutorial is also included, for those who like to boot up and go. Another strength is the scenario editor, which permits players to create their own battles, including an "event list" which can link events from out of the theater to the game. Clearly, they're hoping the digital *grognards* will create numerous new scenarios with these tools.

Desperate battles at "Hellfire Pass" during the North African Campaign, 1941. The 4th Indian Division prepares an assault on Italian positions

Fulda Gap, Germany, 1955. The U.S. 7th Cavalry is about to have another very bad day



Guderian's attack across the Meuse; France, May 1940. Note the colored flags, which indicate the degree of cooperation between the attacking units

Operational Art of War makes modifications to several standard game conventions, and the result is an excellent "feel" for operational warfare. Game play uses a modified "I go-U go" sequence. Generally, the first player is variable, based on an "initiative roll" by the computer. Movement and combat for one player only follow. Combat, however, takes a certain amount of turn time. Thus, if you attack first, you reduce the amount of movement for your whole force proportionately. An interesting feature is the variable game length. There is an end turn, but based on random events, the game may end several turns early or late. This prevents the "edge of the world, end of time" syndrome common in board games as players destroy their forces, knowing the war will end at the end of their phase.

The game does an excellent job at capturing the feel of operational warfare during the middle of the century. This synergy of game mechanics permits you to tackle many of the operational commander's problems. For example, you must deal with the realm of uncertainty: what is the morale and staying power of your forces, how many supplies and reinforcements are available, what will the enemy do (fog of war), and who will strike first (initiative)? You must also decide on allocation of reserves, reinforcements, and air and naval power to influence the battlefield. Once these decisions are made, objectives and engagements must be linked to the overall plan, which will face violent opposition from the enemy. This requirement to balance immediate needs against important future possibilities while maintaining a flexible execution plan in the face of a determined enemy makes this title an evolutionary improvement the state of computer wargaming.

The Operational Art of War is an excellent step forward in computer wargaming. The underlying models and emphasis on detailed modeling of morale, logistics, and command control all point to much greater realism, without significantly reducing playablity. The *grognards* among us will eagerly await *Volume II*, the modern follow-on. *–Richard A. Lechowich*

Editor's note: The box for Operational Art of War *states the game supports Internet play. It does not—it only supports play-by-e-mail (which requires the Internet to transfer files) and hotseat. The review does not take into account this omission, in large part because we don't feel this kind of game lends itself to multiplayer as well as, say,* Unreal. *However, those interested in playing the game online should be aware that TalonSoft is planning to release a patch in the future that adds this feature.*

★★★★½

Norm Koger's The Operational Art of War Volume I: 1939-1955

TalonSoft • www.talonsoft.com •
Requirements: Windows 95, 75MHz Pentium or higher, 16 MB RAM, 4X CD-ROM Multiplayer: 2 players, PBEM, hotseat

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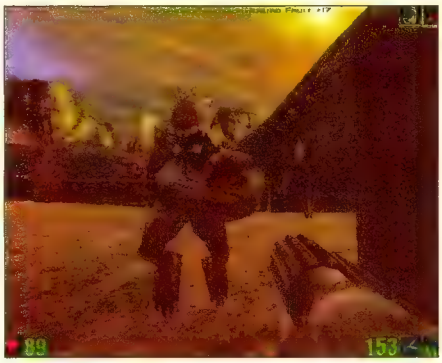
Unreal

Unprecedented, yet still a tad bit unready



[top to bottom]

Nali Castle. Not too long ago, this would have been a cut-scene, not gameplay

This Skaarj doesn't like you eating his fruit. Now you're gonna pay...

No more Warpigs of the powers, hand of God has struck the hour... or at least, the hand of a power-amplified disrupter is about to turn back the clock on this Warlord

The Feast Hall at Nali Castle. Cozy place, eh?

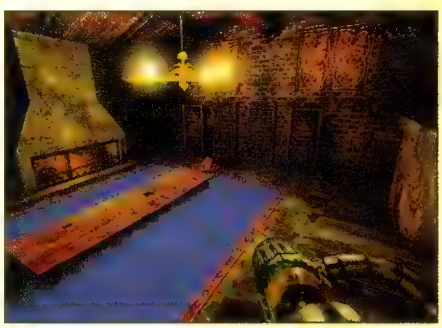
Ever since it was first announced, *Unreal* has had a lot to live up to. Billed as a *Quake* killer—the game that would transform 3D shooters and end id's dominance of this wildly popular market niche—*Unreal* the game has often gotten lost in *Unreal* the hype. Huge magazine ads, dedicated websites, perennial trade show displays, even a line of cheesy science-fiction novels have all been part of GT Interactive's great promotional effort. Cynical gamers long ago began to think that where there was so much PR smoke, there couldn't be much gaming fire, especially as the project dragged on and on with no end in sight.

Well, it's here, finally. Was it worth the wait? That depends. For those who believe that splendid visuals are the be-all and end-all of action games, yep, *Unreal* is the millennium made flesh, or at least digital. Compared to developer Epic MegaGame's creation, id's *Quake II* looks frumpy and dowdy, while LucasArts' *Jedi Knight* looks Spartan and harsh. Nothing so far has the look of *Unreal*; it is, quite simply, the most beautiful 3D shooter ever—on the proper (read: beefy) hardware. With gobs of RAM (64MB is really the effective minimum) and at least a first-generation Voodoo card, a 200MHz Pentium is still required to get a taste of the full *Unreal* experience. Anything less is, well, just real. With the right setup, though, this game delivers all the graphic splendor promised, and then some. The first time Nali Castle looms out of the dark, or the second time through the alien mothership in "The Darkening" level, that's when all the work that went into this game really bears fruit. In terms of visual impact, nothing comes close.

Ah, but the sad reality of the wild, wacky world of computer games is that there should, by common agreement, be some sort of actual game behind even the most wonderful sound and light shows. It is in this area that the giant-killer betrays its feet of clay. While it visually humbles the likes of *Quake II*, the gameplay in *Unreal* is more like the feeble slap of a 98lb weakling than the mighty sling of the biblical David. Though adhering to all the requisite first-person shooter conventions—start out unarmed, find stuff, kill enemies, find the exit, repeat as necessary—*Unreal* manages to do all this with a stunning lack of soul and fire. It's all very mechanical, despite the sometimes surreally beautiful surroundings. Move. Shoot. Throw a switch. Gawk at the scenery. Die. Reload. Ad nauseum.

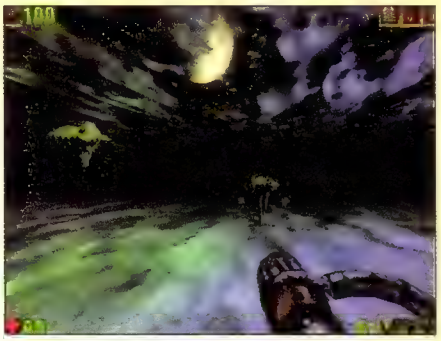
OK, that's par for the course for most shooters, but it's so much more noticeable here. Most folks accept that *Jedi Knight* was an aberration; imagine, a shooter with a real theme and a story. The *Quake* games had zero plot, but everyone loved them. Still, *Unreal* makes overtures towards being much more, and thus its failures are that much more glaring. There is no opening cinematic to set the scene, no inter-level movies to add atmosphere. Little messages left here and there hint at the semblance of a story, but they are poorly written and uninspired, and no one bothered to actually integrate them with anything players can actually do in the game. Exits are not marked, and it's entirely possible to wander irrevocably out of a level with a good portion of it unexplored. Enemies tends to appear in no more than pairs, though sometimes the pairs come very close together. They also do a lot of standing around, noodling *Stairway to Heaven* on alien sitars or something, but certainly not watching for the player. The overall effect is one of growing ennui. As the levels (after level after level) move by, progress through the game becomes more the Long March than a roller-coaster adrenaline ride.

The much-vaunted AI is, indeed, much better than that in most shooters, though not discernibly better than that in *Jedi Knight*. The first few times a Skaarj does his patented barrel roll right or left, it's pretty amazing. The four thousandth time, however, merely reinforces the idea that Epic substituted two programmed moves for the one normally allotted to bad guys in first-person shooters. One area where *Unreal* does do a great job, though, is in using the vertical; this game really makes players look up and down—again, similar to LucasArts'



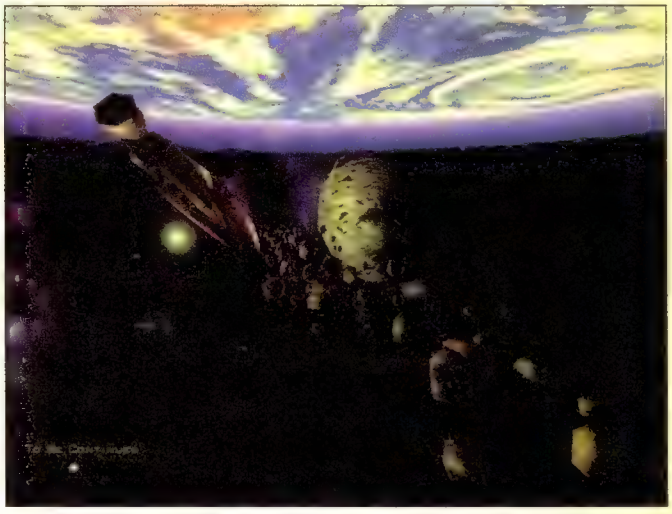
The Queen Alien. Kill her before she breeds again!

This ghost of a Nali priest is trying to tell you something. Best to listen to the dead



Some really evocative vistas unfold on many of Unreal's levels

This Kral seems rather proud of himself. Kill him



Sequel, anyone? This ending cinematic is, well, the only cinematic in the entire game

game or to *System Shock*. Getting jumped (literally) by plummeting aliens is disconcerting, to say the least. When it comes to killing those beasties, however, the game takes another step backwards. All the bad guys are killer close-in fighters, but the player has nary a good close-in weapon. All the guns are slow, fairly weak, and less visceral than those in *Quake*; a few battles with the sludge thrower or the flak cannon will make most players pine for the super-shotgun or the nailgun.

Admittedly, the aliens look mahvelous, dahling. Their skins are superb, and even up close retain their awesome appearance. The variety of enemies is on par with other shooters, and most look far better than par for the course. With few exceptions, though, they inspire neither fear nor fascination; after a while, all they inspire is irritation, especially the dreaded Pupae (may they all rot in Hell). The Skaarj are descended from a long line of food processors; looking like Rastafarian Predators, they dodge a lot and like to hack and slash. The Titans make the ground shake (a really good effect) and throw rocks, while the Mercenaries fire a variety of weapons and also bounce around like weasels on crank. After dozens of levels of this, though, it all rather blends into one hazy vision of faceless foes and laborious reloads. The payoff, too, is highly unsatisfactory; the endgame is woefully hard and indescribably anticlimactic, a poor reward for the long gaming journey just finished.

Of course, all shooters share some of these problems, but *Unreal* is special. Not only does it claim to redefine the first-person 3D shooter genre, but it fails spectacularly to deliver on that promise in many ways. It's biggest flaw is its most obvious: dead Internet play. In the game box is a little note that, in essence, confesses that Internet play doesn't work and that it'll be fixed "soon." In a game this delayed, coming out in mid-1998, such a lapse borders on unforgivable. For many gamers, the solo game is irrelevant; what's really important for a game's longevity is how well it can sustain a community of rabid Internet gamers, itching for deathmatches and team games with fellow cybergladiators from around the globe. Well, they'll just have to wait a while, or go back to *Quake II*—*Unreal* can't deliver the goods. Lag is unbearable, the server code is pokey, and basically it simply (as of early June) doesn't work on the 'Net. LAN play is better, but face it, multiplayer today means Internet play. Add to this various technical glitches, from vanishing multiplayer configuration settings to problems with reloading quick saves to crash bugs, and you've got a game that screams "premature," even after a year or more of missed ship dates.

Given the technical achievements of the engine, *Unreal* is a very important game despite its flaws. Some levels, such as Nali Castle and The Darkening, are close to being examples of the best that's ever been in sheer impact and stunning visual impression. The Castle proves that yes, you could do a sword & sorcery game with this engine and make it work, while The Darkening shows that at least some of the level designers know a thing or two about scaring the bejeezus out of people. The lighting effects in this game are second to none, and they actually do something for the game rather than merely existing. The ability of the engine to render relatively thin and graceful architecture, as well as excellent spirals and superb detail is sometimes breathtaking. And therein lies the problem. With such a great face, one comes to expect a modicum of a personality, or at least the hope for one. Saddly, that hope remains unfulfilled.

In the years to come, there will be many games based on this engine. Some, like MicroProse's *X-COM Alliance* and Legend's *Wheel of Time*, are already hinting at some exciting possibilities. With the included (beta, unsupported, quirky) editor, talented amateurs are hard at work on levels, mods, and conversions, some of which will surely be very good. Until Epic and GT get Internet play working at least as well as id's games, though, *Unreal* will never fulfill its ambition to be a *Quake*-killer. Rather, it will serve as the inspiration and powerplant for other games, by other designers, games that with luck will build on this marvelous technical foundation and finally make a real game out of it. Then, and only then, will the game live up to its name. Really. *–Robert Mayer*

★★★☆☆

Unreal

GT Interactive • www.gtgames.com • Requirements: Windows 95, 166MHz Pentium or higher, 16MB of RAM, 4X CD-ROM • Mutliplayer: 2-32 players, Internet, LAN

X-COM Interceptor

MicroProse's space combat game is lost in space

[Top] An alien base on the way out

[Left] No more building your own bases; just drop modules onto this graphic

[Right] Where's the horn on this thing?

The best thing about the *X-COM* series is the way it successfully combined strategic and tactical elements. It linked squad-level firefights together like beads on a strategic thread woven from base management, technology research, character development, and an evolving storyline. *X-COM Interceptor* uses the same paradigm, but these beads have a lot less luster, leaving you with little more than a long strategic thread.

Part of the problem is timing. The genre of space combat is in the middle of a renaissance. The seminal *Wing Commander*, in its fifth installment, is leading the pack with spectacular graphics, while the fast and thrilling *X-Wing* series has brought excellent multiplayer support to the table. The upstart *Descent: Freespace* is the classy new kid on the block, while the UK's stunning *I-War* is a British invasion unto itself. It's a good time to be a fan of space combat, but a bad time to sit on the shelves next to other such titles.

The combat graphics in *X-COM Interceptor* would have been acceptable a year ago. A conspicuous particle system is used to represent smoke trails and to beef up the explosions, which are drawn with a translucent effect that doesn't go well with the polygon-built ships (nice shockwave effect, though). The weapon effects are pretty tired, the stars are as flat and colorful as confetti, and the ships move too fast to really develop much personality. The interface during combat is acceptable, with only the most basic targeting options and energy management. There are some amusing little retro dials in the cockpit view, but visibility is horribly limited and not worth the trade-off of reading an "I brake for Sectoids" sticker. Unfortunately the alternative, the full-screen view, is missing some important info.

This isn't to say *Interceptor's* combats are necessarily bad. They're bite-sized, but ultimately forgettable, chunks of frantic action. They start out almost prohibitively difficult (remember those early *X-COM* missions, armed only with pistols?), but as you research new toys, the frustration factor smoothes out into an occasionally enjoyable, but usually repetitive progression of mission after mission after mission. Sure there are some highlights as new weapons, toys, and alien ships are introduced into the game, but there isn't nearly as much variety as the other *X-COMs*. Also missing is the personal attachment to your team from the previous games. The pilots aren't nearly as important as the ships, a fact driven home by the game's interface, which downplays the individual pilot stats and names. And, unlike the other games, you have little control over your colleagues, and thus little sense of their accomplishments and failures.

The interface in the strategy portion of the game is at times inconvenient. The base management isn't very clean and the view of the universe is always limited by the little viewing window or obscured by text in the report screens. Research and manufacturing are too streamlined, while sensor probes, which are crucial for keeping tabs on the galaxy, require too much micromanagement. Nonetheless, the interface has a great look and feel very much in line with the other *X-COM* titles.

This game serves as another example that MicroProse is being dragged into Internet gaming kicking and screaming. As with their otherwise excellent *Magic: the Gathering* game, *Interceptor* has only the most threadbare and unimaginative multiplayer support. There is no option for anything but deathmatches, with players free to choose the most expensive and powerful weapons. The alien ships aren't available, and there's no variety or balance among the three ship types.

Interceptor is often entertaining, and the strategic portion of the game is just as much of a nail biter as the first three titles, but all the *X-COM* games eventually reach a point where new combats are tedious and overbearing. "Not another encounter," you sigh, anxious to research a new technology, finish construction on your third base, or build a new cache of advanced weaponry. But in *Interceptor*, the tedium point arrives far too soon. The space combat just doesn't measure up to the expectations set by the previous *X-COMs* or the state of the genre today. Ground Control to X-COM: return to Earth!—*Tom Chick*

★★★☆☆

X-COM Interceptor

MicroProse • www.microprose.com

Requirements: Windows 95, 166MHz Pentium or higher, 16MB of RAM, 4X CD-ROM

Multiplayer: 2-8 players, Internet, LAN, modem, serial

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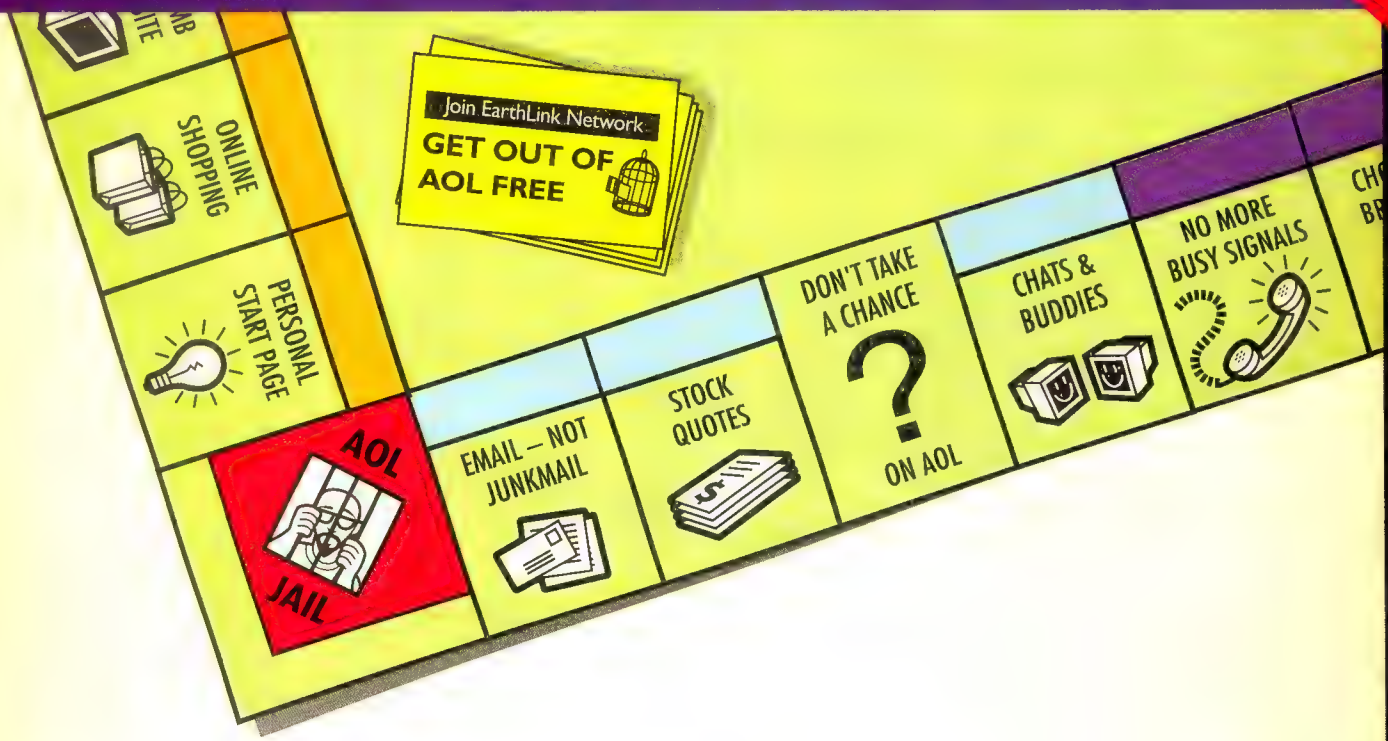

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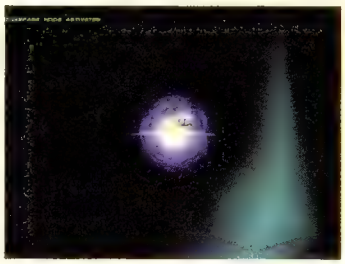
Descent: Freespace

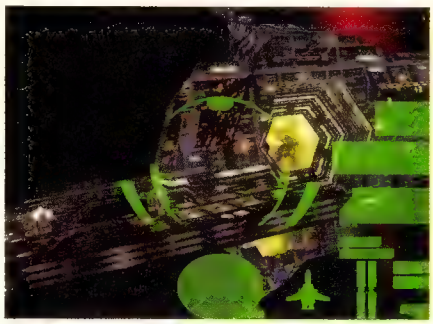
The latest installment of Space, the Usual Frontier

OK, seems we've got a problem here. First there was *Forsaken*, then there was *Unreal*, now there's *Descent: Freespace*—these are titles that get the technical aspects right but, uh, forsake personality in the process. Is this the true legacy of 3D acceleration?

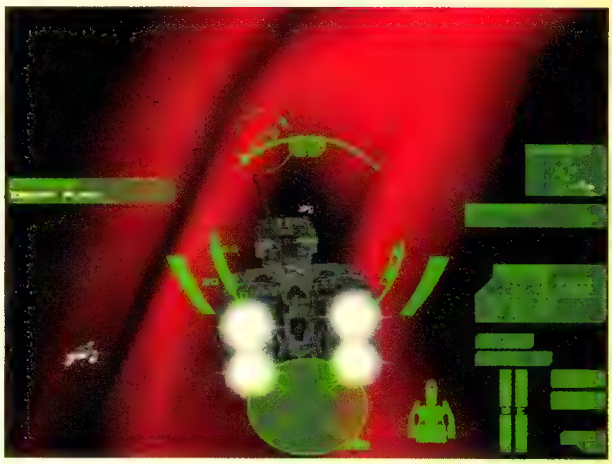
Freespace, the new space shoot-em-up from Interplay which rather deceptively borrows the name of the company's famous 3D shooters, is a clinic on how to make a technically solid single-player space combat game. It offers excellent control and configurability of the ships, weapons, in-flight options and joystick setup, generally good mission design and an excellent mission editor. But it's not as enjoyable as one might think, thanks to too many storyline clichés, little immersion in the universe, a busted multiplayer module and an unshakable sense of having seen it all before.



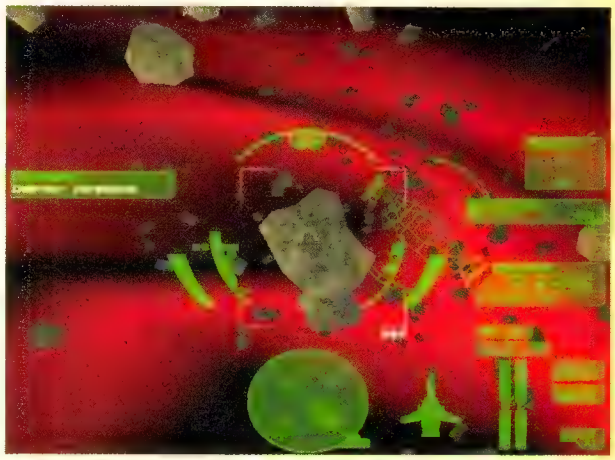
A Terran ship heads for home



It's either a Terran capital ships or an interstellar Hilton



Never underestimate the value of a good escort service



Asteroid hunting makes for a cool mission

Complaints of zombies appearing in CompUSAs across the nation every time LucasArts releases more *Star Wars* stuff like *Womprat Hunter*, *Stormtrooper Sportsman* and the *Dark Jedi Disk Defragmenter* are understandable, but you have to admit there *is* value in a recognizable setting and characters.

Graphically, *Freespace* is stunning, with the requisite Direct3D-driven ships, backgrounds, visible ship damage locations and explosions rendered in almost photorealistic detail. Sound effects and incoming voice transmissions from wingmen, enemies and superiors are comparable to those of *Wing Commander: Prophecy*, and framerates remain solid given the proper 3D hardware. Detail options and the many ships' HUDs and weapons loadouts are full-featured and easily customized through the game's gentlemanly interface, as are the controls, which allow literally everything to be rebound for maximum comfort and efficiency. The wingmen command system is particularly impressive, allowing the human pilot to order virtually any flight group to perform virtually any mission-critical action. Designer Volition has done a commendable job with *Freespace*'s technical aspects.

In its earliest stages, though, *Freespace* is downright boring. Aside from the regrettably necessary training exercises, the first few missions revolve around a tired storyline involving the conflict between man and a typically warlike group known as the Vasudans. Fortunately, the proceedings pick up with the later introduction of a third, far more dangerous intergalactic race which forces the humans and Vasudans to quickly reevaluate their relationship. It's almost as if the designers underwent a sudden burst of inspiration: the mission goals become more innovative, race relations become more complicated and the flight sequences begin to toy with all manner of sneak attacks, betrayals and intentionally confusing encounters. In this respect, *Freespace* at times stands up to *TIE Fighter*, though the wingmen and officer personalities and the sense of belonging in the universe remain weak.

Freespace's other cardinal sin is its essentially nonfunctional multiplayer module, which is laggy to the point of being unplayable over the Net. Assuming they ever get it working (there have been two largely ineffective patches as of this writing), the game has some nice features like microphone support for communicating with other players to complement team play and cooperative campaigns.

The inclusion of FRED, the *Descent: Freespace* editor, is a victory for the good guys, however, as FRED is a deceptively powerful utility which enables the creation and tweaking of individual missions as well as campaigns. The editor remains reasonably intuitive while offering access to essential details like enemy behavior and general piloting skills as well as the armaments and shields of the individual ships. With its ability to create highly detailed single and multiplayer missions, FRED should extend *Freespace*'s life considerably.

While fun in many respects, *Freespace* can also be somewhat frustrating. A great deal of thought clearly went into many aspects of the game: the numerous ships and weapons can offer a great deal of play time, the graphics and customizability are excellent and the missions and story become increasingly immersive. The more you play, however, the more you will probably wish for a few well-developed characters and a greater sense of having a meaningful place in the *Freespace* universe. It's clear the design team are great fans of both the LucasArts games and the *Wing Commanders*, but you have to wonder if they conceded too much of their own innovation in paying homage to others'. *–Geoff Stratton*

★★★½☆

Descent: Freespace

Interplay • www.interplay.com • Requirements: Windows 95, 166MHz Pentium or higher, 32MB of RAM, 8X CD-ROM • Multiplayer: 2-12 players, Internet, LAN

Redneck Rampage Rides Again!

But Interplay's fusty franchise is losing steam—fast

Think of a funny joke. Now tell it to the person sitting next to you. Wait a few months—then tell it again. And again. And again. Loses some of its luster, doesn't it?

Redneck Rampage Rides Again!, the sequel of sorts to *Redneck Rampage*, has all the sparkle of a joke that should have been retired ages ago. *Rampage* was never a groundbreaking game by any stretch of the imagination—it was, effectively, a *Doom* clone that out-did *Duke Nukem* in terms of offensive humor—but the southern-fried, scatological humor was refreshing. For awhile. By now, however, the one trick of this particular pony has been pretty much exhausted. The fourteen-levels included here offer some new bad guys (cheerleaders, biker boys), some new environments (DisGraceland, Area 69), some new weapons (dynamite-packing chickens, a sling blade) and, most notably, a couple of vehicles (motorcycles and swamp buggies). But play-action often reverts the same old hit-switches-in-the-right-order-to-proceed drag, a device that worked spectacularly in *Doom* but is now in desperate need of a tune-up, and the *Build* engine, even tweaked, is showing its age.

Serious gamers who want pinpoint timing, unimpeachable clipping and really interactive environments aren't much attracted to the *Redneck* series. Less serious gamers who value a good joke as much as a good firefight, however, will find the same moronic humor in ample evidence here. The Area 69 sign shows evidence of once having read "Area 51"; some inbred seems to have crossed it out and replaced it with his favorite double digit. Jackalopes are dispatched with a muttered curse about the "critters," while the bra-blasting vixens who seem to have stepped living and breathing from a Russ Meyer flick make an encore appearance. Mojo Nixon once again contributes to the soundtrack, and, as always, a "cuss pack" can be downloaded from the Interplay website (just in case the game doesn't offend you enough as is). Upcoming shooters like *Sin* and *Half-life* should raise the bar for first-person shooters; in the meantime, *Redneck Rampage Rides Again!* offers funny but fusty frivolity. *–John Altman*

Welcome to Area 69—huh, huh

★★½☆☆

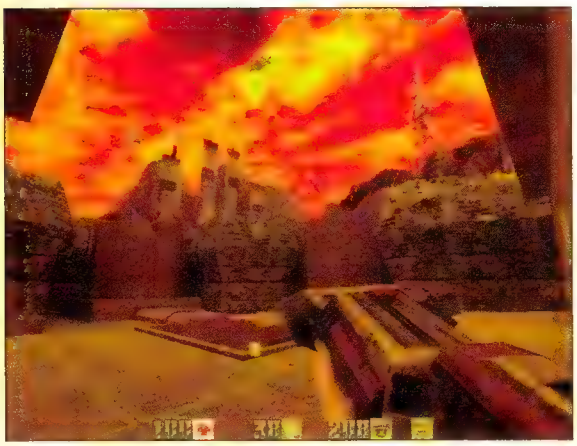
Redneck Rampage Rides Again!

Interplay • www.interplay.com • Requirements: DOS, 90MHz Pentium or higher, 16MB of RAM, 4X CD-ROM • Multiplayer: 2-6 players, LAN, modem, serial

Quake II Mission Pack: The Reckoning

Slogging through sewers to kick some Strogg sphincter

There's enough meat left on the carcass of the corridor-based first-person shooter to make *Quake II Mission Pack: The Reckoning* a genuinely pleasant way to spin away a few hours, but don't expect that same reckless passion you used to feel during your youth. The new mission from Xatrix—invade the Strogg homeworld, then carry the battle to a Strogg moon base—has its moments and its massacres, but it also suffers from a sense of sameness that borders dangerously close to blandness. Endless hallways, elevators, computer terminals, switches, locked doors, cards, keys, and stacked crates are drearily familiar to even a casual acquaintance of the genre; if you find the wandering too wearying, screw the Strogg and skip right to the excellent new Deathmatch levels.



Under a blood red sky

In typical add-on fashion, *The Reckoning* unveils a few new weapons (the twin-barreled Phalanx, the ricocheting Ion Ripper, and a puckish Trap that converts monsters into health) and a couple of new creatures (the Strogg-reviving Repair Bots and the Gekk, a "bio-luminescent" species of gibbon-esque pack feeders who soak up a bit of damage before bursting apart in a riot of gold-colored, incandescent crap). There's also a new ammo bonus (quad-rate fire) and plenty of familiar cyborgs with newly-tweaked arm cannons.

But *The Reckoning*, despite a few nice touches, is severely limited by the corridor-shooter mentality; the seven Deathmatch maps, with their wide open spaces and cunning design, are more creatively and appealingly conceived than the eighteen levels in the mission proper. The game also places too much reliance on water as an endlessly fascinating medium for exploration; slogging eternally through sewer-pipes and aqueducts doesn't contribute much to keeping the pace up. Sweeping multiplayer options (32-player deathmatches, with up to four-person cooperation) and a climactic trip to the Strogg's secret moon base work in *The Reckoning's* favor, but ultimately this add-on has got too many halls and not enough mauls … or, for that matter, balls. *—John Altman*

★★½☆☆

Quake II Mission Pack: The Reckoning

Activision • www.activision.com • Requirements: Quake II • Multiplayer: 2-32 Players, Internet, LAN

The X-Files

Paranoid? You should be

I'd tell you, but I'd have to kill you

A letter-boxed interface offers benefits both practical and aesthetic

The show's signature elements (time-and-place type, lower left) haven't been forgotten

For Skinner, that's a smile

The X-Files, that creepy, millennial, sexy, smart, oh-so-glossy cultural phenomenon, stretched its wings in two ways this year: by jumping from the small screen to movie theaters (*Fight the Future*) and computer monitors (*The X-Files* game). Sure, there have been *X-Files* CD-ROMs before (*Unrestricted Access*), and determined X-Philes have been able to find X-Games on the Web for years, although most of them involve chugging a beer every time Mulder gets beaten up. But this is the first adventure game, not to mention the first *official* game, designed for the show's often-rabid fans. As such it enjoys the participation of Chris Carter, the creator, as well as maestro Mark Snow, writer Frank Spotnitz, director of photography Jon Joffin, and several key cast members including leads David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson.

You play Craig Willmore, a not-quite-rookie agent in the FBI's Seattle Field Office. One day (April 2, 1996) an odd, snide bald man shows up and asks for Craig's help. Assistant Director Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) is hot on the trail of two missing agents, Dana Scully and Fox Mulder. Seems Scully and Mulder were last heard of three days before, when they checked into a Seattle-area motel to investigate a case shrouded, naturally enough, in mystery. (And, yes, the game answers the question of whether or not their connecting door was locked.)

The X-Files game uses a new multi-platform engine called VirtualCinema, which is supposed to make you feel as if you're inhabiting an *X-Files* episode. Oddly enough, it almost works. Any gamer who has slogged through live-action games featuring painful acting, cheap sets, lousy lighting, and endlessly repeating loops of film will appreciate the brisk pacing, multiple plot-lines, and attractive environments here. But there are inherent problems with trying to immerse the player in pre-shot film—for one thing, the game takes up a whopping seven discs; for another, most environments are sharply bounded (you can't step off the set, after all); for a third, you'll probably spend a lot of time clicking around and around just to find a good point of view for any given scene. These problems, however, are lessened by the same impressive production values displayed by the television show—plenty of gorgeous visuals, above-par acting, creepy music, and intelligent scripting. As a bonus the whole thing is letterboxed, which has practical value for interface purposes but also appeals greatly to film snobs.

The X-Files repeatedly bellies up to near-greatness but always slips back to mere above-adequacy. Some notably thoughtful touches (fire off a random e-mail to anyone in your address book and you'll get back an answer that actually makes sense) are balanced by some oddly sloppy oversights (the phone on the desk in your office is just window dressing; you're supposed to use your cell phone to make all your calls). Along the same lines your crime database, which goes to the trouble of pausing momentarily when you use the search function (nice touch), also ignores the fact that a generic name like James Wong should bring up many more results than just the one guy you're looking for. Not all of the acting is stellar, but in all fairness it's hard to soar as a thespian when your dialogue has been cut up into three-second snippets. Mulder and Scully's roles are not much more than glorified cameos, despite the number of times they appear on the packaging; and, while the game does look pretty nice, the *real* budget ($60 million) went to the movie.

The in-jokes, not surprisingly, pile up fast and deep. Crammed to overflowing with signature *X-Files* elements like conspiracies, cancer, aliens, autopsies, and computer hackers, the game still finds time for humorous rib-nudging (it has a special fixation with the possibility of romance between Scully and Mulder, just like the movie). Serious *X-Files* fans will doubtless enjoy the game on many more levels than novitiates. And first-time gamers need fear nothing—the designers have included an Artificial Intelligence option, which falls somewhere between holding your hand and dragging you breathlessly forward.

There *is* a conspiracy going on, this summer, and you'd have to be blind to miss it. The perpetrators—Twentieth Century Fox, Hyperbole Studios, and Chris Carter, among others—are conspiring to remove money from your pocket. Resistance, as another summer movie franchise reminded us, is futile. *–John Altman*

★★★½☆

The X-Files

Fox Interactive • www.foxinteractive.com • Requirements: Windows 95, 120MHz Pentium or higher, 16MB RAM, 4X CD-ROM; MacOS, 120MHz Power Macintosh or higher, 12MB RAM, 4X CD-ROM • Multiplayer: None

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GT Interactive (Action)
Release: 12/98 PC CD
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Activision (Action)
Release: 8/98 PC CD
$48.99

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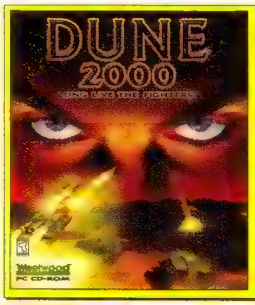

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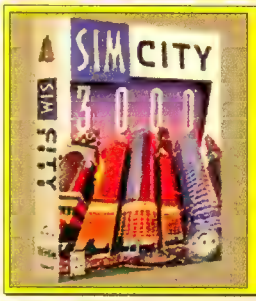

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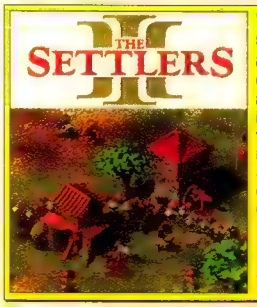

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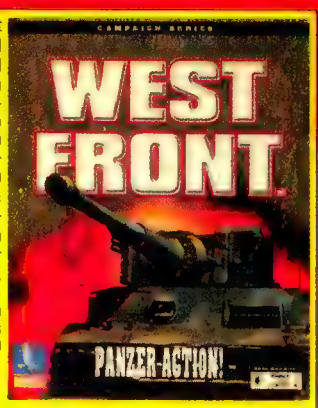

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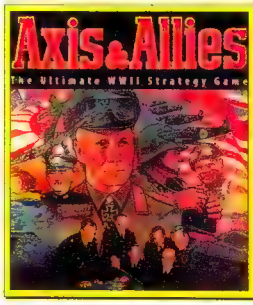

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Release: 8/98 PC CD

Ultima descending?

Before I read your article on *Ultima Ascension* [*CGS+ 93*], I pretty much didn't care about the game. I trusted Mr. Garriott to produce a game not unlike the previous *Ultimas*. Then I read your article, especially the 'Dragons on fire' part. Here's why I'm concerned.

Ed Del Castillo says "We didn't want to do this to them [people new to the series] by focusing on things like 'a storyline' and 'depth of play' and 'highly immersive world.'" Well Mr. Castillo, a game that doesn't focus on storyline, depth, and immersiveness is a plain and simple arcade game.

"...*Command & Conquer* [which Del Castillo produced while at Westwood Studios] really took wargaming out of the Paper Age...." Anyone who thinks *Command & Conquer* is a wargame must also think that *Quake* is an RPG.

Del Castillo wants to take out all the traditional things that made the *Ultima* series great. Also, it seems he wants to sell the game to the mass market while still keeping hard-core RPGers happy. Well, it's been tried before, and it failed miserably.

I am not an *Ultima Dragon*. I only started playing the *Ultima* series two years ago. However, I am a member of the CRPC on *Ultima Online*. We are a group dedicated to true role-playing, where baking bread is indeed a factor. I realize the chances the game being changed at this point are slim, so I wrote this letter to show the viewpoint of a non-Dragon (but still a very hard-core RPGer).

Patrick Dawson
aka Baldain Ironfist

Dragon's ire

I read the article about *Ultima Ascension* and while it's interesting, the main reason I'm writing is because of the capsule on the *Ultima Dragons*. You are correct that many of the Dragons are upset over many of the things being done in *Ascension* (no party etc.), but my complaint is that you make the Dragons sound silly. "Cute Dragon name," "We can, we can, trill the Dragons," "Do it anyway, cajole the Dragons." Also the Dragons are not "a somewhat small" group of fans, the membership numbers over 10,000. I have a modest *Ultima* site myself and am a member of the "Ring of Dragons" a ring of *Ultima*-oriented web sites. My site is http://jeanne.net/ultima.htm. It has a brief history of the series, some MIDIs from *Ultima V* and a link to the rest of the Dragon Ring. There is also a link to the *Ultima Dragons Internet Chapter* for anyone who is interested in *Ultima* or joining the *Dragons*.

I understand Origin wanting to release a game that will sell to the masses, even 10,000 fans buying the game would not make it a monetary success in today's market. Most of the Dragons will buy *Ascension* anyway, just because it is *Ultima*. But please do not make the entire membership of Dragons sound silly and simple minded just because we would prefer to see a more traditional *Ultima*. I will be interested to see if you do any research and reply to this in a serious or a sarcastic manner. Your magazine is a good one, I do enjoy the reviews etc., this is the first complaint I've made.

Tom Mage
King Bahamut Dragon
UDIC

PS No comment about the "Cute Dragon name" please.

Make fun of our readers? Surely you jest? But seriously, the article was not making fun of the Dragons. The rift between them and Origin is newsworthy, and we presented a balanced view of both sides of the issue.

However, the problem with the Dragons' requests is that they seem to be absolute—do it this way or we'll hate the game. Everyone has the right to voice their opinion; however, the Dragons should understand that no game has been designed by 10,000 people. If Origin's smart, they won't ignore any good advice about their product—we should let them design the game as they wish and judge the final product. If it's better than baking bread, we'll praise them. But if it's warmed-over Tomb Raider, *we'll eat them for lunch. –ed*

Grumble grumble grumble

What in the heck is a *grognard*?

Mad Dog
Via Internet

Resident grognard *Robert Mayer offers his own definition:* Grognard*: Noun. From the French, for "one who grumbles." Dates from the days of Napoleon's army of veteran campaigners, who liked to bitch and moan as much as fight. Commonly used to identify long-time wargamers. A* grognard*, in this sense, is a wargamer who has been playing for some years, has very strong opinions on games, and generally is a stickler for complexity, accuracy, and detail. A "*grognard*" game, then, is one that requires significant effort to digest and master, typically featuring scads of rules, charts, tables, and an immense amount of (to the non-*grognard*) ludicrously superfluous data. And* grognards *themselves are crusty, grumpy gamers who will debate muzzle velocities and orders of battle until the cows come home (or they run out of beer). The term is also creeping into other areas of computer gaming, at least with us. In that context it often means "hardcore gamer."*

Big overseas

What an excellent magazine! I hadn't seen it in the UK until the June issue, and bought it out of curiosity. I have never been so impressed with a magazine before, certainly not enough to *tell* them so, and I have been buying computer magazines for about 20 years. The CD is brilliant, and the magazine itself is a good read from cover to cover.

Anyway, well done and keep it up.

Steve B
Via Internet

Any similarities between the reader's name and our editor's is purely coincidental. No, really. –ed

Typo Land

In your review of *Star Wars Rebellion* [*CGS+ 92*], your caption read Mon Monthma, but her name is Mon Mothma, as you can even see on the screen photo.

Tyler Foster
Via Internet

Oops. No, wait. We were referring to her long-lost sister, the one who's never appeared in any of the Star Wars *literature. Actually, she's a key character in the new movies, and is played by Uma Thurman! Yeah, that's it!*

How could you *possibly* have a headline that read: *Wargamer: Napolean* [sic] *1813*? [*CGS+ 93*] This is downright painful!

B.C. Milligan
A Concerned Citizen

Oy. How embarrassing. OK, the game's name is Wargamer: Napoleon 1813. *Would you believe we were off to the E3 show in Atlanta when that headline was being generated? No? Uh, it was a problem with Windows 98 that caused it. Yeah, that's it. –ed*

I just read your *Ultima Ascension* preview [*CGS+ 93*] and you seem to have spelled my name wrong. For the record its Dan Rubenfield.

Also Marshall Andrews also quit from the *Ascension* design team the same day that I did. He is also at Ion Storm.

Dan Rubenfield
Ion Storm
Designer, Deus Ex

Incoherent rants of the month

I HATE YOUR FILTHY MAGAZINE!!!!! IF I EVER BOUGHT ONE I WOULD BURN IT! I HATE YOUR MAG! IT SUCKS! I HOPE YOU GO OUT OF BUSINESS! I HOPE YOUR OFFICE BURNS TO THE GROUND WITH EVERYBODY INSIDE! I HATE YOUR FILTHY MAG! I HATE IT!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

PhatCat
Via Internet

Your parents must be proud of you, so articulate at such a young age.... –ed

Let's all stop using kick-ass because Steve Bauman doesn't like it. [*Upfront, CGS+ 93*]

Wahhhhh. Hey, Steve, don't you love all these kick-ass games? I think *Total Annihilation* kicks ass. I'm going to make an anti-Steve Bauman web page, and guess what it's going to say? Nothing but KICK ASS, damnit.

Jim McDaniel
Via Internet

Decaffeinated brands almost taste as good as the regular ones. Give them a try. –ed

WE'RE LISTENING

Send all correspondence to editor@cdmag.com

Letters may be edited for space considerations.

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Things to do Today

I. Round up prisoners for the lion pits.

II. Visit Forum to assess city's finances.

III. Practice waving to the people (in adoring fashion).

IV. Hire voice coach to help practice evil laughter.

V. Meet with chief architect/artisans to discuss new colosseum.

VI. Send rival a basket of poisoned fruit.

VII. Inspect gladiators for this Thursday's bloodfest at the Colosseum.

VIII. Raise taxes to fund more tax collectors.

IX. Lecture public on benefits of procreating.

X. Hire more vigils to patrol the slums.

XI. Meet Cleopatra for dinner (this might be the night!)

XII. Stage a funny thing to happen on the way to the Forum.

XIII. Absolutely don't forget to...

...LISTEN TO YOUR PEOPLE!

CENTURION

This fruit basket looks absolutely delicious! It's awfully nice of you to have me deliver it to your arch rival. I thought you hated each other?

I wonder if anyone would notice an apple missing...?

LION TAMER

Tipping the vigil off to arrest plebs for loitering was ingenious! It's much cheaper to feed my lions prisoners than the meat from that farmer. We'll see how long those gladiators last against my boys now!

PIG FARMER

Gotta wash the stench of horse manure out of my clothes in time for church! There will be a lot of single ladies at Venus' temple tonight. Rumor has it the priest is going to denounce birth control!

VIGIL

I'm being transferred back to the slums for riot control – the Lion Tamer tipped me a gold piece to round up some fresh meat for his pets.

PRIEST

Dedicating the temple to Venus was a smart move. Church attendance hasn't been this high in years! Then again, neither has the city's population.

TAX COLLECTOR

If you are planning to build a new Colosseum as I suspect, you'll need a lot more money, and a lot more guys like me to gather it. People who think taking candy from a baby is wrong just haven't bothered to try it.

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- **Visual feedback: The real-time effects of the player's actions are immediately visible on screen.**
- **Various terrain sets include deserts, forests, mountains and multiple elevations.**
- **Construct temples to various gods of the Roman Pantheon and witness the effects on your city.**
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